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**The development of a Neorealist theory of military capability mutualisation and its application to cases in contemporary Europe**

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CAPABILITY MUTUALISATION AND ITS APPLICATION TO CASES IN  
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## **ABSTRACT**

In recent years, and particularly in the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis, European states have found it increasingly difficult to maintain breadth and scale in the military capabilities available to their armed forces. Cooperative initiatives such as the pooling, sharing and specialisation of roles and capabilities provide a way for states to retain access to military capabilities while funding them more efficiently. Yet while efficiencies can be considerable, such forms of cooperation also entail a degree of mutual dependence and a curtailment of autonomy. Mutual dependence can lead to the risk of entrapment by a partner into detrimental circumstances otherwise avoided, or even abandonment leading to an inability to act. Recent initiatives demonstrate, however, that European states are prepared to countenance mutual dependencies with each other, from industrial design and production through to frontline operations. How, then, do these states realise greater efficiencies through mutual dependence while creating sufficient confidence to mitigate the apparent risks of entrapment and abandonment?

To provide a generalised answer to this question requires a theoretical perspective. Yet the specialisation and sharing of military capabilities in pursuit of greater efficiency does not fit comfortably with extant international relations theories, particularly the tradition of realism, which emphasises state sovereignty in an anarchic international system. Neorealism, the dominant school of realist thought, assumes that such conditions rule out specialisation in security matters, and push states towards self-help instead. Defence cooperation ought thus to be concerned with the effective aggregation of forces rather than mutualisation for efficiency. This thesis claims, however, that mutualisation of military capability in pursuit of greater efficiency deserves recognition as a distinct phenomenon in international relations. It is argued that by expanding the purview of neorealism to include more localised 'process' or 'relationship' variables other than system structure alone, it is possible to construct a model that can explain variance in the occurrence and form of military capability mutualisation.

The theoretical model posits that military capability mutualisation occurs at various temporal and functional distances from the frontline of operations and, where concrete interests are highly aligned, even on the frontline itself. Hypotheses from the model are thus tested against several capability mutualisation initiatives under three contemporary bilateral frameworks: the Franco-British 'Lancaster House' Treaties of 2010, the BENELUX Declaration of 2012 and the German-Netherlands Declaration of 2013. It is shown that while the systemic factors at the heart of neorealist theory remain formidable barriers to capability mutualisation, in certain configurations they can in fact encourage its occurrence and help to underpin mutual confidence in the reliability of a partner and the minimisation of risks of entrapment and abandonment. The theory thus offers both a partial explanation for the phenomenon of capability mutualisation in contemporary Europe as well as a framework for further investigation and guidance as to the prospects of similar initiatives elsewhere.

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## **Prologue: a future scenario**

*A civilian airliner is believed to have been hijacked over the North Sea. Despite attempts at communication with the aircraft, there is no response. The intention of those in control of the 'renegade' plane is unknown. The airliner is, however, losing altitude and approaching Belgian airspace potentially on a flight path to Brussels. With a major NATO operation underway to defeat terrorist insurgents in North Africa, it is feared that the city or the nearby NATO headquarters may be a target. A week ago, the Royal Netherlands Air Force took over from the Belgian Air Component on a four-month rotation to defend the airspace of the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg. As the plane approaches Belgian airspace, a Dutch pilot is scrambled and told to await orders to shoot down the aircraft. Under the terms of the Benelux air policing agreement, however, an order to fire will come not from the pilot's superiors in the Netherlands, but from the Belgian Defence Minister. The most profound security responsibilities of the Belgian state now rest with a foreign national in a foreign fighter jet.*

*As part of the operation in North Africa, French armed forces are involved in a sustained air campaign involving targets on land and sea. An advanced Franco-British missile is proving highly effective and winning plaudits from American commanders, but war-stocks are running low. France and the UK have specialised aspects of the development and production of the missile, meaning that vital components are designed and built in the UK as well as France. While French support for the operation is strong, opinion in the UK has taken an isolationist turn and is sceptical; many parliamentarians now believe that constant air strikes are only fanning the flames of domestic terrorism. Elements of the British media are also pursuing an anti-French campaign over a separate trade dispute, and the relationship between the President and Prime Minister is strained. Despite difficult relations, however, production of the crucial components is stepped up in the UK and more missiles are supplied to French forces.*

*At The Hague, high-level discussions have begun between Germany and the Netherlands. Germany has publicly supported the NATO mission from the outset but has not yet made any significant military contribution. In Washington, there is*

*mounting discontent with Germany's apparent lack of commitment, and German diplomats are concerned that they must respond accordingly. They want to offer experienced military planners to direct the NATO operation at the corps level, and are being encouraged by the US military to do so. German capability in this field is, however, shared with the Netherlands in the form of the 1<sup>st</sup> German-Netherlands Corps HQ. The Dutch Government is, however, also supportive of the mission and is keen to deepen its own contribution. An agreement is expected soon.*

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The tale outlined in the prologue to this thesis is a fictional one. The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) operation it describes and the political positions of the states relating to it are entirely imaginary. Yet it is not a wholly unlikely scenario. Indeed, the military capability arrangements that underpin the narrative are not fictional at all. As will be seen, they are just three examples of an increasing number of such arrangements between European states<sup>1</sup>. Mutual reliance on others for specific military capabilities is, however, a controversial matter. It touches on highly sensitive questions of state sovereignty and military autonomy. Such arrangements rest on the absolute commitment of each party to the other; abandonment could lead to serious military, political and human consequences. As will be seen over the following chapters, decision-makers claim to be confident that the cases of mutual dependence considered by this thesis are robust and reliable. Yet reliance on another always implies some degree of risk that the partner will not reciprocate their side of the bargain, or that they will drag the other into a situation otherwise avoided. Such dilemmas could, however, be avoided altogether by retaining fully autonomous capabilities. *Why is it then that European states have forgone their autonomy and willingly put themselves into a condition of mutual dependence for the generation and deployment of some of their most vital military capabilities?*

This central puzzle can be broken down into two further questions: Why is it that European states have sought out such arrangements at all, i.e., what is it that precipitates a search for mutually dependent capabilities? And, accepting an apparent need for such cooperation, what is it that gives the partners confidence in their mutual support for each other? Recent scholarship and policy analyses have touched on both dimensions of this problem, but have not gone into great depth on the specific question of mutual dependence for military capabilities. Important empirical cases remain largely un-investigated. And, although some academic research touches on aspects of the phenomenon, there is no theoretical explanation

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<sup>1</sup> See Table 1.1 below. For the purposes of this thesis and the case studies below, 'Europe' will refer to European NATO and/or EU member states.

dedicated to explaining the general phenomenon of mutual dependence for military capabilities in contemporary Europe. Indeed, the subject matter seems to pose a distinct challenge to the rationalist strain of international relations theory, of which neorealism is perhaps the most widely-practiced. A theory that regards sovereignty and the primacy of security as integral to the very notion of statehood appears to struggle with forms of military cooperation that push at the boundaries of these concepts. Thus, this thesis sets out to tackle both an empirical puzzle and a theoretical challenge. Why, albeit to thus far relatively small degrees, are European states mutualising their militaries? And can an established theory of international politics offer a plausible explanation?

This introductory chapter will first consider the current literature on the two aspects of the puzzle outlined above: 'Why at all?' and 'How possible?' It will consider literature that has sought to explain and engage directly with the issues raised by mutual dependence for military capabilities, and it will consider that which deals with a similar but more general problem in international politics, i.e., the factors that give states sufficient confidence in each other to enter deep forms of cooperation. Finally, the chapter will briefly set out the theory and model that will be deployed, the hypotheses that will be extracted from the model, and the overall structure that the thesis will take.

## **i. Military capability, efficiency and mutual dependence**

### *The affordability crisis in European military capability*

Regarding the first dimension of the puzzle, i.e., why European states are seeking out mutual dependence at all, there is a strong consensus among scholars and analysts that the primary motivation is to extract greater efficiency from scarce resources (Válašek, 2011; Faleg; Giovanni, 2012; Jones, 2011; Mölling and Brune, 2011). That is not to say that efficiency is the exclusive motivation behind every case that involves mutual dependence for military capabilities. Indeed, defence cooperation initiatives, including those with elements of mutual dependence, can be used as diplomatic tools to deepen engagement with allies or to show a domestic audience that a government has friends and influence in the world; partial

explanations such as these may arise over the following case study chapters. It will be shown, however, that there is considerable evidence to concur with the prevailing view that efficiency is the primary motivation in most cases. What then explains this search for greater efficiency from the resources that European states commit to their military capabilities?

This is a complex question with explanations at both the domestic and international level. The economic historian Alan Milward argued that states, even when at war, resource their defence spending according to a 'strategic synthesis' of domestic and international factors (Milward, 1979: 20; Freidburg, 1992). In times of relative peace, governments may face demands from their electorates to increase spending in areas such as healthcare, education and pensions, and defence may be relegated as a political priority. International factors will always play a role, however, not only in terms of the rise and fall of apparent external threats, but also in terms of the degree and nature of protection afforded by alignments and alliances with others. This last factor may create a permissive condition that shapes the level of defence spending and may encourage 'free-riding' (Olson and Zeckhauser, 1966; Russett, 1970). Regarding European NATO states, scholars and analysts have noted two crucial trends, which have been observable for several decades.

On the one hand, there is a long-term tendency towards above-inflation increases in the cost of military capabilities (Kirkpatrick, 2008, 2010; Hartley, 2015; Augustine, 2015). It has been estimated that,

'the unit cost of [military] equipment increases from one generation to the next by a factor of between three and ten (with a few exceptional classes outside this trend), equivalent to a trend of 5-10% per year' (Kirkpatrick, 2008: 70).

By way of example, it is estimated that the UK defence budget would need to grow around 3% a year in real terms above the underlying rate of inflation in the economy to maintain capabilities at broadly the same level (Kirkpatrick, 2008: 71); such a rate would amount to an unprecedented level of sustained annual growth in peacetime. Indeed, the British Government recently committed to an annual real-terms uplift of 0.5% in the defence budget (Elgot, 2017). The ever-increasing cost of capabilities is

driven primarily by the pressure on states to seek to maintain a competitive technological edge over their rivals (Kirkpatrick, 2004: 260-261; UK MOD, 2008: 23). And the challenge of keeping up with US technological innovation, particularly since the so-called 'revolution in military affairs' has further exacerbated the pressure on European states (Dyson, 2010; Futter, 2015). An additional inflationary challenge is the tendency for personnel costs to increase above underlying rates. This is particularly acute for those states that require highly-trained military professionals to perform complex tasks with advanced equipment (Alexander and Garden, 2001: 515).

On the other hand, there is also a tendency towards flat-in-real-terms defence budgets (Alexander and Garden, 2001: 510). In the post-Cold War period, and even before, European states have preferred to use the proceeds of economic growth to fund domestic priorities, a choice reflected in the widespread decline of defence spending as a share of GDP among European NATO states<sup>2</sup> (Alexander and Garden, 2001: 518). This combination of flat budgets and long-term inflationary trends in the cost of military capability serves to significantly reduce the purchasing power of national defence ministries over time. The problem is a long-standing one, and is not confined to Europe. In the late 1970s, Norman Augustine extrapolated from trends in capability cost inflation and the US defence budget that, 'In the year 2054, the entire defence budget will buy just one tactical aircraft.' In 2015, Augustine noted that his prediction was still 'right on track' (2015: 3).

Accordingly, European states have tended to deal with such pressures by periodically 'salami slicing' numbers of personnel, aircraft, ships, tanks and so forth (Kirkpatrick, 2010: 57). This has allowed them to reduce costs while retaining the breadth of capabilities that they require to maintain their own defence obligations and contribute to operations alongside their allies. The problem, however, as Augustine has shown, is that assuming trends remain broadly the same, this cannot be a sustainable approach. Indeed, while such socio-economic and technological trends have been evident since the end of the Second World War (Alexander; Garden, 2001: 513), in more recent years it has been suggested that an inevitable crunch

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<sup>2</sup> See tables in chapters four to six.

point is approaching for European military capabilities. In a 2001 article called 'The arithmetic of defence policy', Michael Alexander and Timothy Garden, two former senior British officers, argued that,

'At some point in the next several years the UK, as well as Europe as a whole, risks passing a critical point beyond which the maintenance of a military capability for anything other than the most local defence requirements will become impossible.'  
(2001: 513)

As will be seen in the following case studies, the 2008 financial crisis and its fiscal impact in several European states appeared to bring forward the 'critical point' that Alexander and Garden had predicted. The dire financial straits in many states called into question the 'salami slicing' approach and threatened the viability of entire military capabilities. Indeed, the Dutch army was forced to give up its tanks, and the UK took the decision to forego carrier strike and maritime patrol capabilities for a decade (Steinglass, 2011; UK Government, 2010b: 5, 27). As will be seen in following case study chapters, this threat to the viability of discrete military capabilities became particularly acute in several European states, and began to undermine their foreign policy goals, particularly that of maintaining their reputation with the United States for credible military deployments. The depth of the challenge of sustaining military capabilities, given both its long-term roots and the more immediate trigger of the financial crisis, led to advice and policy responses from think-tanks and institutions, creating an important body of 'grey literature' on the subject of deep defence cooperation (Válašek , 2011; Faleg; Giovanni, 2012; Mölling et al 2011, 2012). For example, in *Surviving Austerity*, an influential think-tank paper published in 2011 by the London-based Centre for European Reform, Tomáš Válašek argued that closer European defence cooperation would be vital to improve efficiency to maintain capabilities (2011). And, at the international level, the EU's so-called 'Ghent Initiative' of 2010 pledged a new focus on 'pooling and sharing' military capabilities, and NATO launched its 'Smart Defence' initiative in 2011 with a similar agenda (Council of the European Union, 2010; NATO, 2011).

The most significant responses came, however, in the form of bilateral or small groups of states, forming what have been termed 'islands' or 'clusters' of capability

with little or no formal institutional relationship with NATO or the European Union (EU) (Válašek, 2011: 29, 39). The UK, for example, which was to make deep cuts in defence following the financial crisis, suggested in a *Green Paper* in 2008 that its armed forces should look to greater ‘international partnership’, including specialisation and sharing with others to sustain military capabilities (UK MOD, 2008: 32). Most significantly, and as will be explored in the three case study chapters that make up the empirical body of research in this thesis, existing bilateral defence cooperation partnerships were rejuvenated and extended to new areas (see Table 1.1 below).

First, in 2010, the UK and France launched the ‘Lancaster House’ treaties, creating a new framework for defence and security cooperation and launching concrete initiatives of unprecedented depth, including elements of mutual dependence in areas including nuclear weapons and missiles (UK Government, 2010a). Secondly, in 2012, the BENELUX countries of Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg deepened their longstanding cooperation arrangements (Belgian Government, 2012)<sup>3</sup>. Finally, in 2013, the Netherlands and Germany also took steps to deepen a pre-existing relationship, focussing particularly on cooperation between their armies (Netherlands Government, 2013). Other similar initiatives were also launched between other European states in the same period, including the deepening of cooperation between Scandinavian states through the Nordic Defence Cooperation initiative (NORDEFECO), and the ‘Visegrad’ cooperation among Eastern European states (Nemeth, 2017). These broad bilateral agreements are made at the political level, but also provide an ongoing framework for concrete capability cooperation initiatives, of which several, though not all, contain elements of mutual dependence.

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<sup>3</sup> While the BENELUX treaty included some involvement by Luxembourg, this thesis will focus on bilateral Dutch-Belgian cooperation.



Agreement	Year	Key capability initiatives
NORDEFCO <i>Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden</i>	2009	Joint combined logistics; common contracting; maritime counter-measures (MCM) vessels; airspace surveillance (NORDEFCO, 2011)
Franco-British Lancaster House Treaties	2010	Nuclear weapons testing and verification; centres of excellence in missile production (UK Government 2010a)
EU Ghent Initiative	2010	Maritime surveillance; air-to-air refuelling; medical field hospitals (EDA, 2011)
BENELUX Declaration <i>Belgium, Netherlands, Luxembourg</i>	2012	Common acquisition of frigates/MCM vessels; joint air space patrols (Belgian Government, 2012)
NATO Smart Defence	2013	Pooling maritime patrol; medical treatment; aviation training (NATO, 2014)
Germany-Netherlands Declaration	2013	Integration of Dutch air mobile brigade; tank company into German divisions (Netherlands Government, 2013)
Visegrad Joint Statement/Long-Term Vision <i>Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia</i>	2013/14	Training, exercises, joint procurement, joint air policing (Visegrad, 2014)

**Table 1.1. Post-financial crisis defence cooperation agreements**

Though the immediate pressure of the financial crisis raised the profile of defence cooperation among decision-makers and policy analysts, the idea of creating mutual dependencies to deliver greater efficiencies is not a new one. The challenge of maintaining an indigenous defence aerospace industrial capacity, for example, precipitated a limited element of industrial mutual dependence as early as the 1960s, with Anglo-French collaboration in fast jets and helicopters (Hussain, 1989: 129). And since the 1970s, the UK, Germany, Italy and Spain have embraced deeper industrial specialisation in the production of their principal fighter jets, the Tornado and Typhoon; and a wider grouping has pursued a similar approach to develop and acquire the A400M transport aircraft. Capability sharing has also been undertaken in the unique, longstanding NATO AWACS programme, where the aircraft and their support services are owned by NATO and staffed by multinational crews (NATO, 2017a)<sup>4</sup>. The increasingly challenging environment for the sustainment of military capabilities in the 2000s brought, however, a new focus to the possibilities of defence cooperation for efficiency, and led to the development of new initiatives and the enhancement of existing cooperation.

<sup>4</sup> The 'NATO E3A Early Warning and Control Force' is a fully integrated NATO-owned and multi-nationally-crewed capability. It operates the Boeing E3 Sentry Airborne Early Warning and Control System (AWACS).

### *Mutual dependence for efficiency: how possible?*

While it can be argued that there is a broad consensus as to the initial ‘trigger’ for seeking mutual dependence, i.e., that of extracting greater efficiency from limited resources, the second element of the puzzle must now be addressed. How is it possible to act on that need for efficiency? The very fact that states can act on this need for efficiency by embracing mutual dependence, to whatever limited degree they do, is not a straightforward assumption. As noted, theoretical perspectives on international politics, particularly that of the neorealist school, would tend to expect states to prioritise autonomy over mutual dependence. There are, however, three strands of literature that have, directly or indirectly, made contributions to understanding the puzzle. The first is that body of ‘grey literature’ referred to above, i.e., that produced by organisations outside of academia, such as think tanks, governments, industry and so on. It is predominately this literature that has sought to attempt to define, categorise and understand the phenomenon of mutual dependence for military capabilities and its potential scope for the future. Secondly, there is an emerging body of academic work that deals directly with the post-financial crisis defence cooperation initiatives referred to above. And finally, there is a broader literature in the field of international relations on the question of security cooperation between states, intra-alliance dynamics and so forth.

#### *i. Pooling, sharing and specialisation - the ‘grey literature’*

Policy analysts tend to classify defence cooperation for efficiency into three broad types: pooling, sharing and specialisation. Generally, these terms relate to specific military capabilities, although when defining specialisation analysts and decision-makers tend to talk of ‘role’ or ‘task’ specialisation, though in practice this is likely to mean a discrete military capability (Maulny and Liberti, 2008; Diesen, 2013: 68; Zandee et al, 2016). The first form of cooperation identified is that of the pooling of military capability. The European Air Transport Command (EATC) provides a helpful illustrative example (EATC, 2017). Under the EATC, member states pool both their aircraft and the individual tasks they want those aircraft to perform, for example, to take supplies to an operation in Afghanistan. In other words, tasks are allocated to different national air forces as if there were a single fleet of aircraft. As it avoids

duplication of effort, this is far more efficient than each state using its own aircraft for every single task required, particularly when several states are contributing to an operation in the same geographical area. There is little mutual dependence in this example, however, because the aircraft remain under national ownership and, strictly speaking, 'command'. As such, they can leave the pool to serve national contingencies whenever required (EATC, 2017: 1).

Thus, pooling may provide some efficiency gains in the use of military capabilities. It is, however, through specialisation and sharing that the greatest efficiencies may be available. This is because under these forms of cooperation, it is no longer necessary to fund whole capabilities or expensive aspects of them. It is also in these forms of cooperation that there will be considerable mutual dependence, thus reflecting the second dimension of the puzzle outlined above. How is it possible for states to have sufficient confidence in each other to create mutual dependencies through the specialisation and sharing of military capabilities?

The potential for specialisation among European NATO armed forces has a long history, yet little of substance has ever materialised (Liska, 1962: 122; Heise, 2005). Indeed, analysts of contemporary defence cooperation are sceptical that it presents a realistic option for European states to achieve greater efficiency, particularly in relation to whole capabilities or 'roles' (Válašek, 2011; Henius, 2012; Giegerich, 2012; Diesen, 2013). In one sense, capability specialisation need not imply any great level of mutual dependence with others, nor need it be based on any formalised agreement with another party. It could, for example, simply mean that a state concentrates on some military capabilities and divests itself of others. The Czech armed forces, for example, provide one case of whole capability specialisation in NATO by maintaining a specialism in chemical, biological and nuclear substance disposal (Henius, 2012: 35). Yet this does not necessarily imply that there is significant mutual dependence within the alliance for Czech expertise, useful as it may be in certain circumstances. And in other areas states may simply end up with 'specialisation by default' because budgetary pressures forced them to prioritise certain capabilities over others. Again, however, this implies no formal arrangement for mutual dependence (Henius, 2012: 38; Giegerich, 2012: 72).

Jakob Henius has addressed the possibility of capability specialisation as a deliberate policy choice in the context of NATO's 'Smart Defence' initiative (2012). Noting that there is 'no formal NATO definition of specialisation', Henius highlights several significant barriers to its use. First, he argues that the inherent unpredictability of the future is a key obstacle, i.e., alliances are not for eternity (2012: 33). How, therefore, can a state know for sure which capabilities it will need to keep? Second, the maintenance of a broad spectrum of military capability ensures 'strategic flexibility'. Narrowing its scope through specialisation will constrain this flexibility whereas a breadth of capabilities means a state is more likely to be able to offer something of use to an alliance (2012: 31). Finally, while specialisation for a NATO 'Article 5' mutual defence scenario may be more acceptable due to a strong degree of solidarity within NATO, states also use the same capabilities for other missions, including those that are out of NATO's area, in *ad hoc* coalitions, or on their own, a point also noted both by former Norwegian Chief of Defence, Sverre Diesen and Válašek (Henius, 2012: 34; Válašek, 2011: 20). Thus, they view these obstacles as practically insurmountable, with Diesen noting that 'this kind of advanced role specialisation has not so far been seriously considered anywhere' (2013, 62).

Others concur with these assessments, but draw on language more familiar to international relations theory to do so. Válašek, for example, argues that while specialisation would promise to make significant savings it raises an 'entrapment and abandonment' dilemma for states, which he identifies as one of the most critical barriers to deeper and more efficient defence cooperation in Europe. Thus, he concludes that 'deeper specialisation seems out of reach for the foreseeable future' (2011: 20). Tom Dyson, considering the potential for the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) also draws on the concept of entrapment and abandonment, as developed by neorealist scholar Glenn Snyder in his 'alliance security dilemma' (1984). For Dyson, this dilemma remains the most critical challenge for European states seeking to build 'common military capabilities' (2010: 239; 2013: 421). And, for Bastian Giegerich, the entrapment and abandonment challenge is ultimately one of state sovereignty itself,

‘The core difficulty, however, relates to sovereignty. If nations specialise in some areas but withdraw from others, the accompanying increase in mutual dependency will give rise to fears of abandonment and entrapment.’ (73)

Similarly, Marcin Terlikowski argues in relation to specialisation that, ‘States are invariably attached to the concept of retaining as much sovereignty in the defence and security domain as possible.’ (2010: 3) And this view reflects a wider position in literature on European defence cooperation that defence is ‘the first and last bastion of national sovereignty’ and even ‘sacrosanct’ (Howorth, 2011: 5; Dyson, 2012: 21).

Despite this general scepticism, however, it has been noted that there may be some capability areas where specialisation might be more acceptable to states, and therefore more likely. Giegerich argues that, ‘Specialisation could more usefully focus on less sensitive, non-front-line areas such as education, training and logistics support’ (2012, 74). Similarly, Anke Richter and Natalie Webb argue that NATO could use a division of labour approach, with some states opting to specialise in support services, which carry less risk, while others would retain frontline capabilities (2014: 354). Such an approach would seem, however, to come up against some of the fundamental politico-military issues raised by Henius; even the smallest of European states prefer the flexibility of a balanced force, and that means access to frontline capabilities. The notion that function may reduce fears of entrapment and abandonment is, however, an important one, and will provide a critical analytical component of this thesis.

Giergerich also speculates that specialisation may be more likely where mutual dependence is formally agreed between states across specialised capabilities, leading to greater confidence of ‘assured access’ (2012: 71). To take a fictional example, state A would commit to provide infantry, and in return state B would provide heavy armour, around which both would build a joint military formation. To the best knowledge of the author, there is not yet an extant case wherein two states agree to specialise in discrete capabilities in this way and then fully rely on each other for them. Even with such agreements in place, whole capability specialisation would still be likely to infringe considerably on the flexibility of states and risk entrapment or abandonment by their partner. As will be seen, however, there are

now cases of cooperation where there is a form of specialisation in the integration of different kinds of forces at the division level.

There is, for example, a form of capability specialisation in recent Dutch-German army cooperation initiatives. Dutch defence and security analyst Dick Zandee has described such cooperation as 'modular integration', whereby the Netherlands provides its 11<sup>th</sup> Air Mobile Brigade to the German *Division Schnelle Kräfte* or Rapid Reaction Division, thus creating a capability in aggregate that neither state can provide alone. These forces are, however, extractable from the larger formation, significantly reducing mutual dependence (Interview 21: September 2014); it will be seen, however, that there is an element of mutual dependence in such an approach. This thesis will also consider a case of specialisation within and across closely-related capabilities, which applies to Dutch-Belgian naval arrangements for maintenance and support to their frigates and destroyers. Pieter-Jan Parrein has written in some depth on these aspects of Belgian naval cooperation, and echoes the views of others outlined above that the focus on mutual dependence in support services allows for the maintenance of a higher degree of autonomy than if whole capabilities were specialised (2011a: 24).

Finally, the *sharing* of a discrete capability, or aspects of the development of a capability, implies a similarly high level of mutual dependence. Although sharing of frontline capability remains uncommon, the NATO AWACS initiative provides the most high-profile example (Diesen, 2013: 62; Alexander and Garden, 2001: 521). As with Giegerich's suggestion that support services may be more easily specialised, Michael Alexander and Timothy Garden suggested that the most expensive air assets might be shared in the manner of the NATO AWACS, and thus functions at some distance from the frontline shared (2001: 524). Citing the NORDEFCO defence cooperation initiative between Scandinavian states, Diesen has also argued that capability sharing may also be more likely in this aspect of capability development as an example of 'joint force generation'. He argues that states can aspire to retain a broad spectrum of military capabilities at the national level, but then create common defence industrial and support services, such as training and logistics, upon which they could all draw (2013: 64). Thus, any risk of entrapment and abandonment would be lessened because states would not necessarily have to deploy to the frontline on

every occasion with their partners. As will be seen, however, there are also cases of shared capabilities close to or 'on the frontline', notably in the form of the two examples in the prologue above, that of Dutch-Belgian cooperation over air defence, and that of the 1 Germany-Netherlands Corps Headquarters.

Other than the factor of function in relation to specialisation and sharing, the work considered above does not attempt to consider other variables that would make mutual dependence for capabilities more likely. Válašek is something of an exception here, as he lists the 'characteristics' common to such initiatives; for him, the most important is 'similarity of strategic culture', followed by 'trust and solidarity', 'forces of similar size and quality', 'a level playing field for defence', 'clarity of intentions', 'seriousness of intent' and 'low corruption' (2011: 21-27). As with the other authors considered above, however, he makes no attempt to put these insights into a coherent theoretical framework for explanation.

#### *Emerging literature on post-financial crisis European defence cooperation*

In addition to the grey literature identified above, academic work on those initiatives undertaken in the wake of the financial crisis is now beginning to emerge. Alice Pannier has written her PhD thesis on the Franco-British 'Lancaster House' treaty of 2010, focussing on three areas: cooperation in the Libyan intervention of 2011, the Combined Joint Expeditionary Force (CJEF) and industrial cooperation on complex weapons (Pannier, 2016). Pannier's focus is on the Franco-British initiatives as an example of 'bilateral cooperation' as a phenomenon, for which she draws on John Gerard Ruggie's conceptualisation of bilateralism and the logic of cooperation within such a relationship (Ruggie, 1992). Pannier does not consider military capability mutualisation as a discrete phenomenon, nor is she able to from a comparative perspective, as neither the CJEF, nor the Libyan operation provide examples of formalised mutual dependence for military capabilities. She does, however, make some important observations and conceptualisations that are highly relevant to mutual dependence for military capabilities.

Pannier argues that the key challenges for bilateral defence cooperation are *incongruity*, i.e., a divergence in interests between partners; that of *astructuretion*,

i.e., the lack of established institutional frameworks between partners; that of *symmetrism*, i.e., the need for balance or a constant 'win-win' outcome; and that of *entanglement*, i.e. the constraints of other pre-existing relationships and arrangements (2016: 85-96). As will be seen, there is some empirical and conceptual cross-over with this thesis, particularly as regards the incongruity of interests and the need for what Pannier calls symmetrism between states in terms of capability requirements. Yet the theoretical underpinning of Pannier's thesis is that of cooperation or bilateralism as a phenomenon *suis generis*. As such, the issues are addressed in terms of a dyadic relationship with 'entanglement' in the form of third parties as a complicating factor. By contrast, and as will be seen, this thesis will argue that the very possibility for cooperation as deep as that of mutual dependence for military capabilities requires explanation in terms of the configuration of the international system itself, and particularly that of intra-alliance dynamics. This thesis will share, however, Pannier's emphasis on the importance of the convergence or divergence of a set of variables.

Bence Neméth has recently completed his PhD thesis comparing Franco-British, Nordic and Central European defence cooperation initiatives (2017). Nemeth asks why these initiatives took place outside of NATO and EU structures and were based instead on 'regional' groupings. He concludes that each case-study had a variety of contextual factors at play, including a history of cooperation, similar perceptions about the disadvantages of NATO/EU cooperation and the importance of a supportive political milieu and strong domestic leadership. Neméth does not, however, focus on the puzzle raised by this thesis as to why and how European states have moved to restrict their autonomy in favour of mutual dependence for their military capabilities. Elsewhere, Tom Sauer has written on Belgian policies as a kind of avant-garde for European defence cooperation, focussing particularly on Dutch-Belgian naval cooperation. While he provides a thorough-going evaluation of elements of Belgian defence cooperation initiatives, his analysis lacks a theoretical approach, and does not consider in detail why it is that Belgium and the Netherlands can consider such deep forms of cooperation in some areas, though not in others (2015).



Finally, Matthew Harries has written on the Franco-British nuclear weapons cooperation treaty of 2010 (Harries, 2012), which will be addressed in a following case study chapter. Again, Harries does not pursue a theoretical treatment of the issue, though some of his conclusions do echo those of analysts outlined above, suggesting that Franco-British nuclear weapons cooperation is likely to be most successful at functional distance from its frontline deployment, and is less likely the closer it gets to cooperation over operational deployment (2012: 22). Aside from these works, the empirical field remains under-studied; for example, to the author's knowledge, there are no sustained investigations drawing on primary sources regarding the new Dutch-Belgian air defence arrangements, or on recent innovations in Dutch-German army cooperation. More importantly, however, no work has yet provided a systematic theoretical analysis of a wide variety of cases that can be generalised against the concept of capability mutualisation, and integrated into an existing theory of international politics. That is the goal of this thesis.

### *Perspectives from international relations theory*

The grey literature considered above does not take a theoretical approach to explanation, but its emphasis on state sovereignty and dilemmas over 'entrapment and abandonment' demonstrates an implicit, and occasionally explicit, acknowledgement of neorealist theory. The chapter will return to a discussion and elaboration of neorealism and defence cooperation below. The broader proposition, however, that the alignment or convergence of certain factors might mitigate the collective action problems that beset the use of military capabilities, could be claimed by several theoretical perspectives, not only that of neorealism. Recent scholarship from various perspectives has considered aspects of similar questions in relation to the origins and prospects for the EU CSDP, and thus provides a useful parallel (Bickerton et al, 2011; Krotz and Maher, 2011). The following paragraphs briefly assess the contributions and perspectives that non-realist theoretical approaches might bring to the question of capability mutualisation.

Described as the study of 'the role of collective beliefs and ideas on which states rely in calculating how to realise their underlying goals' (Legro and Moravcsik, 1999: 11), in recent years epistemic theory or constructivism has taken on increasing

importance in analysis of European security. This literature emphasises the prospect of 'ideational convergence' through means such as elite socialisation and learning (Meyer and Strickmann, 2011: 64), and examines claims for the existence and role of a 'European strategic culture' (Meyer, 2005, 2006; Giegerich, 2006). Could such a shared strategic culture, across the EU or even between a smaller number of states, help to explain the variation in occurrence and form of capability mutualisation?

These are undoubtedly important facets of empirical actuality to bear in mind for a full and rounded account of any concrete capability initiative, and as noted above, Válašek attaches high importance to alignments of strategic cultures as a pre-requisite for defence cooperation (2011: 21). It may be that, for example, Belgium and the Netherlands are more likely to trust each other because they have similar strategic cultures. Yet if that is the case, it is not clear why mutual dependence is in fact quite variable across Dutch and Belgian capabilities, much of which remain partially or wholly autonomous for deployment. As will be seen, despite shared cultural outlooks, both states have their red lines as to the limits of capability mutualisation. A shared strategic outlook thus seems unlikely to provide sufficient confidence between partners to mutualise all their capabilities, and thus struggles to explain why they would do so in a few discrete areas. That said, it cannot be dismissed as a factor that might contribute to a more holistic explanation of any given example of mutual dependence, and will be recognised and assessed in the following case study chapters.

Liberal intergovernmentalism is a theoretical approach to international politics based on the idea that state preferences are formed through competition between domestic interest groups, and are then pursued and bargained at the international level with others (Moravscik, 1997: 518). While this approach has yet made relatively little contribution to the field of European defence cooperation (Krotz and Maher, 2011: 571; Howorth, 2007: 202; Pohl, 2013), it may be that there are aspects of a concrete case of specialisation or sharing that relied on a strong sense of alignment of interests between domestic interest groups in the respective states, as indeed Neméth suggests (2017). Yet in terms of state policy being fundamentally determined by such means, as regards defence policy, preferences tend to be more fixed and there is an 'absence of a clearly identifiable market of domestic interest

groups' (Weiss, 2011: 191). Military capabilities, by their very nature, reflect a security environment that even liberals concede tends to militate against cooperation for 'absolute gains' for fear of others making 'relative gains' (Powell, 1991). The methodologically individualist foundations of liberalism also tend to rule out a strong role for systemic variables and international 'conditions' more broadly (Hyde-Price, 2013: 403; Joseph, 2010: 53; Wight, 1992: 2006). Thus, liberalism, conceived of as a contest of interests at the domestic or 'unit level', offers an angle on capability mutualisation, but it is hard to see how it can gain traction in terms of offering a generalised explanation for its form and occurrence.

Finally, institutionalism, associated most prominently with Robert Keohane (1984) draws on economic theory to demonstrate how, through the provision of greater levels of information between states, institutions can reduce the 'transaction costs' associated with cooperation (Menon 2011, 96). Moritz Weiss has developed an explanation for the formation of the CSDP based on the claim that it was created to reduce transaction costs for EU member states when they required solutions to new security concerns that arose in the aftermath of the Cold War (Weiss, 2011). His argument is familiar to that relating to specialisation and sharing. i.e., cooperation can improve efficiency but may also lead to the risk of 'opportunistic behaviour' (Weiss, 2011: 192), which leads to fears of entrapment and abandonment and places a premium on the 'credibility of the partners' commitments' (2011: 193). Alongside this problem of uncertainty, Weiss also identifies the notion of 'asset specificity' of capabilities. Where cooperation is over specific assets, efficiency gains will be high, but the risks of opportunism will also be high. Where asset specificity is more 'general', efficiencies will be lower, but the risk of opportunism will likewise be lower (2011: 193). Accordingly, Weiss's analysis chimes with the trade-off between flexible forces and efficiency outlined in the grey literature. Given, however, that the capability mutualisation initiatives to be considered here occur outside of formal international security institutions it seems that 'information' is not necessarily the most decisive element of the phenomenon; or at least that a more systemic 'international politics' theory may be able to get at those apparently significant issues of entrapment and abandonment more effectively.

### *Literature on mutual dependence for military capabilities – insights and oversights*

Academic literature on the phenomenon of mutual dependence between states via specialisation and sharing of military capabilities remains very slim. Most writing on the subject tends to come from the ‘grey literature’ of think-tank analysts and experts. As such, it lacks foundations in any of the schools of international relations theory. Nor does it attempt any systematic, social scientific explanation as to why the phenomenon is present and why it may vary in occurrence and form across different states. This literature does offer, however, some very important empirical insights, and it identifies the fundamental issues and challenges at the heart of mutually dependent military capabilities. As Henius argues, European states do not know for sure that they can rely on their allies forever. And they need to use their military capabilities across a wide range of commitments, thus they require ‘strategic flexibility’. Despite these challenges, however, the literature suggests that the *function* of a military capability might make it more likely for states to specialise or share capabilities because entrapment and abandonment risks are lessened by the distance from the ‘frontline’ at which the mutual dependence is created. Finally, Válašek lists various empirical ‘characteristics’ of these kinds of initiatives, and attaches particular importance to alignments of strategic culture, trust and similar size. As he concedes, however, these characteristics are not necessarily always present nor wholly consistent (2011: 21).

By contrast, Pannier’s work on Franco-British defence cooperation is theoretically-grounded and empirically rich. While not specifically aimed at the phenomenon of mutually dependent military capabilities, her thesis puts the alignment of interests and the symmetry of cooperation arrangements at the heart of her explanation. Finally, as has been seen, other scholars working in established theoretical schools have attempted to explain the key variable or variables that might make collective military action among European states more likely, be it for reasons of culture, domestic interest groups or the effects of institutions. Doubtless, all these approaches have some insight into the kinds of initiatives outlined above, but they also lack what the author of this thesis regards as the essential ingredient of a causal explanation of any phenomenon in international politics, and that is the independent effects exerted at the system level, particularly those of structure and alignments in

the form of alliances. A system theory assumes that whether two or more states can cooperate in depth is related to their place in the system as much as to their own internal attributes. Or, to put it another way, while Belgium and the Netherlands are content to mutualise aspects of their military capabilities, would the Netherlands seek out mutual dependence with Russia for maintenance support services to its ships? Would the UK and China jointly develop an anti-ship missile? Both seem extremely unlikely. The pre-eminent theory of international politics in systemic terms is that of neorealism, and thus, it is to this theory that the thesis will turn for its explanation.

## **ii. A theoretical approach to military capability mutualisation**

### *Research approach*

It has been argued that the central puzzle of this thesis is captured in the following question:

*Why have European states forgone their autonomy and willingly put themselves into a condition of mutual dependence for the generation and deployment of some of their most vital military capabilities?*

This question can be broken down into two further sub-questions:

*Why is it that European states have sought out such arrangements at all, i.e., what is it that precipitates the search for mutually dependent capabilities?*

*What is it that gives the partners confidence in their mutual support for each other?*

These research questions relate to the geographical region of Europe, specifically to NATO member states, and to a broadly contemporaneous historical period. One approach, then, would be to take the three case studies identified above and investigate them through a contemporary history approach, attempting to make empirical generalisations based on a comparison of narrative explanations for each case. A different, and arguably more fruitful approach, and the one this thesis will follow, is to develop and deploy a theory to attempt to explain these cases as

examples of a wider phenomenon that can be explained in general terms. Theory offers several advantages over historical narrative. First, it can provide a structured means by which to sift and select the myriad empirical data that may justifiably relate in some way to the research question, a process Max Weber described as ‘the thoughtful ordering of empirical actuality’ (Jackson, 2011: 22). This ordering comes at a cost, however, in that a parsimonious theory may ignore or downplay other explanations; it is thus necessary to take due care in applying the theory to empirical actuality and making claims for causation.

Secondly, theory offers the possibility, if not to predict specific outcomes, then at least to justify general expectations of why a given phenomenon occurred and how it is likely to develop or even disappear, i.e., to make claims about the effects of continuity and change in the conditions envisaged by the theory. Finally, and perhaps more fundamentally, much of the empirical description of mutual dependence in the literature considered above is itself loaded with highly conceptual language, for example, that of ‘sovereignty’, ‘autonomy’, ‘mutual dependence’ and ‘interests’. As Kenneth Waltz noted, fact and theory are interdependent, and this issue appears quite striking in the case of mutual dependence for military capabilities (Waltz, 1979: 12). Thus, even for a historical narrative, dealing with and making sense of highly conceptual language would seem an unavoidable task.

Thus, there are two dimensions to the attempt to answer this question. One is to explain, at least in part, the origins of recent international agreements that create mutual dependence in military capabilities between states. The other is to provide the theoretical means to do so, which may also be generally relevant to cases not considered in the thesis, i.e., to other potential case studies in contemporary Europe, and to other regions and historical periods where similar phenomena may occur. An advantage of basing this theory on the neorealist school is that, as will be seen, neorealism is a system theory. As such, it explains the pressures or forces that shape a wide range of state behaviours and outcomes in international politics. It can provide a framework for a cluster of questions around the emergence of the phenomenon in contemporary Europe. The question as to why European states have sought out mutual dependence at all, i.e., why they seek efficiency in the generation and deployment of their military capabilities, can be explained in part as a

response to systemic factors. Likewise, the very possibility of mutual dependence between states, i.e., the reason as to why European states have sufficient confidence in their partners to forego the flexibility and security of autonomy, is also shaped by the systemic context for action.

That said, a theory can only attempt to explain according to the logic of its own content. In the complexity of empirical reality, the different case studies are idiosyncratic; a 'full' causal explanation for these research questions would need to embrace a potentially infinite amount of data and an ungainly number of variables. The potential significance of variables outside the purview of the theory must, however, still be assessed. Thus, as will be explained in more detail in chapter three, while the theory will be tested as an explanation for the cases under consideration, it will be accepted that in causal terms, other factors play important roles. For example, while unit-level variables such as personalities and idiosyncratic domestic political cultures are not included in neorealist theory, their causal consequences may be considered as part of an analytical narrative. For this reason, the degree to which such variables might undermine or compliment the theory will be considered on an *ad hoc* basis through structured analytical narratives.

The theoretical approach outlined above calls for the following procedure, which draws on Waltz's conception of theory building and testing, as set out in his *Theory of International Politics* (Waltz, 1979: 13). First, it is necessary to carefully define the phenomenon at issue and develop a theoretical explanation for that phenomenon. Second, it is necessary to extract from the theory a model of behaviour and/or outcomes. Third, a set of hypotheses are derived from the model and tested against empirical actuality in various ways. These procedures are developed in more detail over the following two chapters, but will now be summarised below.

#### *A new definition and model of military capability mutualisation*

Accordingly, the thesis will seek to develop a new definition of one aspect of mutual dependence between states for specific military capabilities. As set out above, mutual dependence can, in principle, take place across completely separate capabilities. As noted above, Giegerich has raised the possibility of formal reciprocal

arrangements for this kind of 'role specialisation', i.e., for states to rely on each other for discrete capabilities performing discrete roles. It has been seen, however, that no such specialisation initiatives currently exist, perhaps due to the risks of entrapment and abandonment and restrictions on flexibility outlined above. For this reason, this thesis will disregard mutual dependence in terms of wholly separate 'roles' or 'tasks', and will focus instead on mutual dependence solely in relation to the concept of military capability. This has the advantage that in doing so it is possible to draw on an important and helpful conceptual understanding of the term as used by military practitioners; an approach apparently overlooked in academic literature on European defence cooperation.

NATO states view military capability not only in terms of its 'frontline' use or 'role' in operations in terms of what personnel and their equipment can do, but also through the entire process of 'lines of development' from design, production, training, personnel and support through to actual deployment (UK MOD, 2014: 8). In conceptualising capability in this way, it is thus possible to consider mutual dependence between states at different points *within* a single capability development process. And indeed, this is how such cooperation is conceptualised by at least one of the European armed forces studied for this thesis (Interview 14, June 2014). In this way, it is possible for military capability to be understood as 'mutualised' between states, in one or several aspects of its development and deployment, and in principle, across all of them.

Furthermore, this definition makes it possible for this thesis to introduce a novel conceptualisation, which is that of the 'distance' at which mutual dependence may take place from the frontline deployment of a capability. This distance can be measured in terms of *temporality* and *functionality*. *Temporality* acknowledges that mutual dependence in the design and production of capability may occur many years, even decades, before that capability is deployed on the frontline. Consequently, even where there is joint development and production of a fighter jet, for example, there need be no significant mutual dependence on the frontline, and considerable autonomy may be maintained. Depending on the aspect of the capability, this temporality may be closer or further from the frontline, i.e., mutualisation of the initial research and design of a fighter jet may be decades away



from the frontline, but the manufacture and supply of a missile may be much closer to the frontline of an operation. *Functional* distance refers to situations wherein the function of the capability itself, or an aspect within the development of a capability, for example maintenance of an aircraft or ship, means that states can keep their mutual dependence at a spatial distance from the 'frontline', and thus avoid embroilment and risk in the most sensitive aspects of an operation.

Finally, and as will be seen, there may also be occasions when it is possible to conceive of mutualisation of capability *on the frontline*, and thus where temporal and functional distance may be low or even zero. In such cases, it is hypothesised, the concrete interests of states must necessarily be highly aligned. While function has been raised in the existing literature, the notion of there being a temporal dimension to capability mutualisation, and even the possibility for its occurrence at zero distance from the frontline have not been considered in these terms. Thus, the notion of distance of mutualisation from the frontline provides a hypothetical model for explaining why it is that states have sufficient confidence in each other to enter into mutual dependence for aspects of the generation and deployment of their military capabilities.

### *Neorealist theoretical foundations*

The model above sets out how the variables of temporal and functional distance from the frontline can explain why states have sufficient confidence in each other to mutualise aspects of their capabilities. But what explanation lies behind this apparent possibility for mutualisation at various points in the development and deployment of military capability? As will be discussed in greater detail in the following chapter, the model is derived from a novel theoretical approach based on neorealist principles. It assumes the fundamental tenets of Kenneth Waltz's original iteration of neorealism, wherein system structure exerts independent effects on states according to the distribution of power within a system and their position within it; and it assumes an anarchic international environment that tends towards balances of power and pushes states towards a logic of self-help for survival (Waltz, 1979). The theory developed in this thesis also borrows, however, important insights, both from Waltz and his fellow neorealist Glenn Snyder, into the logic of behaviour of states within a bipolar or

highly asymmetric alliance such as NATO. These insights relate respectively to explanations of mutualisation at temporal, functional and zero distance from the frontline.

First, temporal distance relates to the durability of a bipolar or asymmetric alliance and the effect such an alliance may have in suppressing fears of balancing and 'relative gains' among its members. It is posited that it is this phenomenon that explains the very possibility of efficiency through mutual dependence because it creates a temporal period of confidence in which the anarchy problematique is reduced, though not entirely eliminated. Secondly, due to the very high asymmetry of capability within an alliance such as NATO, where one ally dominates all others, there is low interdependence and high flexibility of policy between allies. It is thus posited that this condition, along with the expectation of alliance durability, explains the possibility of mutualisation at functional distance from the frontline, i.e., while allies are not aligned across all their interests they are confident in the durability of the alliance and thus have an opportunity to create mutual dependencies in lower-risk functional aspects of military capability. Both these effects relate essentially to structural or alliance-wide effects. For the third form of mutualisation, however, that at zero distance from the frontline, it is necessary to also consider more 'local' relationships among allies.

To explore the relationship between an alignment of interests and zero-frontline distance mutualisation, the thesis will draw on Snyder's notion of 'process' or 'relationship' variables that intervene between structure and unit-level causes. These are: alignment, interests, capability and interdependence (Snyder, 1996: 172). It will be argued that these variables, together with those structural factors outlined above, form particular structural-relational configurations that shape the possibilities for capability mutualisation. This approach allows the thesis to propose a novel way to conceptualise state interests as emanating not only from the unit level, but also as a function of the location of a state within a particular systemic configuration. Thus, subordinate states within an asymmetric alliance can be assumed to hold certain 'strategic ends', to which all their concrete interests can be classified as instrumental. The pursuit of these strategic ends thus lead to a certain 'logic of behaviour' among subordinate states, for example, a predominant tendency to use their military

capabilities to mitigate entrapment by the dominant state. It will be seen that the alignment of concrete interests is very difficult, even unlikely, but there are a few areas where interests and the capabilities that serve those interests are more likely to be fixed, and thus where frontline mutualisation may be possible. From the model above, and its theoretical explanation, three hypotheses can thus be extracted for testing against empirical actuality.

### *Testing the model: three hypotheses*

First, alliance durability is assumed to be the *sine qua non* of military capability mutualisation. The confidence that a mutualisation partner will not become a competitor in the long-term dissolves the relative gains dilemma and dilutes the preference for self-help in the generation and deployment of military capabilities. Thus, a local alliance structural-relational configuration based on alliance durability together with the alignment of a capability requirement may allow for capability mutualisation at *temporal* remove from the frontline. At such distance from the frontline, the high likelihood of divergent concrete interests is not a concern and flexibility of policy is not at risk. Thus, mutualisation at temporal distance from the frontline may underpin the specialisation and sharing of, for example, design and production in defence industrial programmes, as well as elements of capability supporting infrastructure. This can be summarised in the following hypothesis:

H1: Aspects of capability mutualisation may be found at high temporal distance from the frontline, with or without a high alignment of concrete interests.

Secondly, however, low interdependence and high policy flexibility means that while subordinate states may pursue similar strategic ends, in practice concrete interests will often diverge because states have the flexibility to interpret them differently. This is obviously true of idiosyncratic interests, such as, for example, the UK's requirement to defend the Falkland Islands, but also of the flexibility by which a subordinate state seeks to mitigate entrapment by the dominant state. Because subordinate states have such flexibility in dealing with the dominant state, they are unlikely to be sufficiently well-aligned to mutualise their military capabilities for frontline deployment. And, where subordinate states' concrete interests are highly

likely to be well-aligned, for example in NATO's Article 5 mutual defence clause, the military capabilities dedicated to this concrete interest are usually highly transferable and thus cannot be easily earmarked for any given concrete interest. It is the case, however, that some concrete interests, such as the policing of territorial airspace and waters may require the earmarking of capabilities to fixed duties. In such cases, interests and capability requirements may be so closely aligned as to be temporally and functionally identical, and it may then be possible to mutualise such military capabilities at zero temporal/functional distance from the frontline. Thus,

H2: Capability mutualisation may be found at zero temporal-spatial distance from the frontline where there is a very high certainty of support for concrete interests.

Finally, while low interdependence and the transferability of capabilities across interests militates against widespread frontline mutualisation, it does provide an opportunity for mutualisation at a different point in the generation and deployment of military capabilities. Because low interdependence entails high flexibility of policy, subordinate states may be able to make reliable commitments to support each other at a functional remove from the frontline, for example, in maintenance and support roles where the political risks of entrapment and abandonment are lower. This reflects the effects of alliance durability, in that an ally's embroilment in the interests of the dominant state or other subordinate states is not regarded as sufficiently dangerous to risk the future of the alliance. Therefore,

H3: Capability mutualisation may be found at functional distance from the frontline, with or without high certainty of support for concrete interests.

The hypotheses set out above are intended to test the theoretical explanation as to why and how it is that European states are able to mutualise aspects of their military capabilities according to a 'logic of mutualisation'. This is the primary aim of the thesis and can be described as explanation of an 'outcome' in international politics. However, and as will be explained in more detail in chapter three, it is also necessary to go into some depth to consider the claim that an asymmetric alliance leads to a specific 'logic of behaviour' and to the pursuit of certain 'strategic ends'. Thus, before the hypotheses are tested, it will be necessary to explore whether,

indeed, European states do conform to such a logic of behaviour. Finally, it has been noted that a system theory of international politics also has a further utility in that it can provide a framework for a broader explanatory narrative. Thus, the more general question of why European states have turned to mutualisation in recent years has a systemic dimension, and this will be explained in part as a result of a 'logic of crisis'. In this way, the thesis will be able to take on the dual challenge of testing a theory and providing a narrative explanation for a series of historical events.

### *Relevance of the subject and contribution to the field*

It has been argued throughout this introduction that mutual dependence for military capabilities, and more specifically the mutualisation of military capabilities, is a controversial matter, from both an empirical and theoretical perspective. Yet it remains to a great degree under-theorised and under-explored by academic scholars. This is at odds with its growing importance across Europe as a policy measure to tackle the crisis in the sustainment of military capabilities by getting greater efficiency from scarce resources. High hopes have been attached to the potential of initiatives that entail mutual dependence. There will no doubt continue to be highly-informed and innovative work from various specialist think-tanks, and new empirical analyses of recent initiatives will emerge over coming months and years. Social science, however, also has a role to play in attempting to provide a generalised theoretical explanation for the phenomenon. Theory offers a means not only to explain but potentially also to guide policy-makers to new possibilities, and to offer justified reasons as to the likely limitations of the deepest forms of defence cooperation.

The theoretical approach to capability mutualisation set out in this thesis will therefore attempt to provide generalisations within a new analytical framework that may also be applied to old, contemporary and not yet existent forms of the phenomenon in Europe. The thesis thus makes claims to innovation in three important ways. First, by articulating a novel definition of military capability mutualisation as a discrete phenomenon in international politics with the notion of 'frontline distance' at its core. While, as has been seen, not all component aspects of this definition are new, the way in which it has been assembled into a coherent and

defined phenomenon appears, at least to the author, to be novel. Secondly, the thesis integrates the phenomenon into a mainstream theory of international politics, building on established though perhaps overlooked insights into structural effects on intra-alliance behaviour and outcomes, and providing a configurational explanation that emphasises the primary role of the international system, while still accepting the crucial role of 'unit-level' factors in any specific, concrete outcome. In doing so, it finds novel ways to resolve the apparent contradiction in neorealism between international cooperation for efficiency and state sovereignty, and it builds a new way to conceptualise state interests and their role in constraining and enabling capability mutualisation. Finally, in researching and considering in depth under-investigated empirical cases of capability mutualisation, the thesis provides new and informative empirical analyses of the most cutting-edge of European defence cooperation initiatives.

### *Thesis structure*

The thesis will be set out over a further six chapters, covering theory, methodology, three empirical case studies and a conclusion. The following theory chapter will provide a more sustained critique on previous neorealist theoretical treatments of European defence cooperation. And it will develop and set out in more detail the theoretical approach built on the work of Waltz and Snyder and the definition of military capability mutualisation and the way it is informed by alignments of concrete interests and capability requirements. A subsequent chapter on methodology will set out the approach to testing the theory set out above, and will tackle some difficulties and limitations in applying neorealism to empirical actuality. Chapters four to six will consider three empirical case studies, each dealing with examples of capability mutualisation initiatives between European NATO states and launched between the mid 2000s and mid 2010s, focussing particularly though not exclusively, on those that occurred in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis. These case studies will draw on contemporary documents and reports and thirty interviews conducted specifically for this thesis with high-level decision-makers, either directly involved in or with deep insight and relevant expertise vis-à-vis the initiatives. Multiple initiatives will be considered, but all will be framed by three overarching 'local alliance' configurations: Franco-British, Dutch-Belgian and Dutch-German.

Each case study chapter will have three sections. Each section will take the form of analytical narratives guided by the theoretical approach set out above. Only the outcomes under investigation, i.e. concrete cases of capability mutualisation, will be tested against the hypotheses set out above, and these will be dealt with in the final section of each chapter. The first two chapter sections will, however also be framed by the theory and will seek to demonstrate the systemic effects on the states under consideration and the way this effects the generation and deployment of their military capabilities. Thus, the first section of each chapter will attempt to demonstrate the high degree to which European states pursue a systemic *logic of behaviour* that would be expected in an asymmetric alliance, and the way in which this shapes their military capability requirements. The second chapter section will examine a 'logic of crisis' in the way in which each state faced parallel military capability 'means-ends' dilemmas, and the way in which this informed their decisions to seek cooperation through mutualisation. Finally, the third section of each chapter will test the concrete capability initiatives against the hypotheses set out above and assess the extent to which they conform to the 'logic of mutualisation' set out in the theoretical model. In this way, the case study chapters will attempt to provide answers to the research questions set out above. This will thus provide both a test of the general plausibility of the theory but will also help explain the more general question as to why, albeit from an essentially systemic perspective, European states are increasingly turning to capability mutualisation.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **NEOREALISM AND THE MUTUALISATION OF MILITARY CAPABILITY**

The following chapter will deal with the theoretical heart of this thesis. It will begin by setting out the theory of neorealism, particularly those aspects of particular pertinence and apparent conflict with the phenomenon of military capability mutualisation. It will go on to consider how the purview of neorealism might be expanded in order to encompass variables other than structure, but which remain focussed on the system level. Finally, it will set out a novel theoretical approach to the challenge of explaining military capability mutualisation, and explain how three key hypotheses can be extracted from the theory and tested against cases in contemporary Europe.

#### **i. Neorealism**

##### *Self-help, structure and specialisation*

Neorealism, or 'structural realism'<sup>5</sup>, is an approach to international relations developed by Kenneth Waltz in his *Theory of International Politics* (1979). While Waltz claimed his theory amounted to a 'Copernican revolution' in the explanation of international affairs, it was also founded on a long lineage of *realpolitik* and 'balance of power' thought (1979: 69; Gilpin, 1986). Like his realist predecessors, Waltz viewed the international system as one characterised by the condition or 'ordering principle' of anarchy (1979: 114). Waltz's conception of anarchy echoes Thomas Hobbes's 'state of nature', wherein the absence of a single authority leads to 'warre of every one against his neighbour' (Hobbes, 1996: 214). While Hobbes was sceptical that such a condition ever existed between humans, he argued that it was 'in all times' a sound description of the state of international relations, or that between 'Kings and Persons of Sovereigne authority' (Hobbes, 1996: 90). In anarchy, states have no higher authority to call on for their security and must rely

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<sup>5</sup> Due to its emphasis on the causal impact of the variable structure of the international system, neorealism in its Waltzian form is perhaps best described as 'structural realism'. This thesis will, however, follow the convention and use the term neorealism (Waltz uses both terms, apparently interchangeably, e.g., (1997: 914) and (2000: 5)); neorealism also better defines an approach that broadens the theory beyond structure, as will be attempted in this thesis.



instead on 'self-help' (Waltz, 1979: 111). This reliance on self-help puts fundamental limits on international cooperation; states can never be sure of the future intentions of others, and may risk handing rivals a 'relative gain' at their own expense (1979: 195).

Self-help under anarchy also explains why states are vulnerable to what John Herz described as the 'security dilemma'. Uncertainty over future intentions leads to tit-for-tat responses and the risk of downward spirals of fear, mistrust and potentially war (Herz, 1950: 180). Yet the inherent tendency towards balance also leads to a kind of order in the system, i.e., 'the balance of power', which offers greater stability than a Hobbesian 'state of nature' between individuals. Unlike the human state of nature, states are not essentially equal, some have greater power than others, and this may lead to more stability in relationships. States can also balance rival power either by drawing on their own internal capabilities or by aggregating them with others through alliance. Even within balancing alliances, however, the condition of anarchy remains pervasive and uncertainty about the future actions of allied states cannot be dispelled. Thus, Waltz's neorealism is an heir to the 'tragic' tradition of political realism that views a world without a single authority as inevitably prone to the risk of conflict, regardless of leadership, ideological difference or moral concerns (Lowes-Dickinson, 1916; Herz, 1950; Butterfield, 1951).

Neorealism follows the realist tradition in prioritising the importance of material power, or what Waltz terms 'capability', in international politics. It is, however, his conception of capability, and the form it takes in a system, that provides Waltz with his Copernican turn. In a departure from earlier realist perspectives, and based on a highly parsimonious theory, capability is taken as the sole attribute of states under the purview of neorealism, and 'survival' is assumed to be their only end goal (Waltz, 1991: 36). All other 'unit-level' factors such as culture, domestic politics, ideology and individual personalities are excluded<sup>6</sup>. For Waltz, the significance of capability is not that of states in isolation or in bilateral or multilateral relationships, but rather its arrangement or distribution across the entire system. It is this variable distribution of

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<sup>6</sup> Waltz writes of 'units' rather than states when describing his theory. This reflects Waltz's contention that the theory is not meant to be a close reproduction of empirical actuality, but only an abstracted element of reality. This thesis will attempt to use the term 'state' in relation to empirical actuality and 'unit' when making more theoretical points.

power that gives the system its structure or polarity, and which in turn 'shapes and shoves' state behaviour and outcomes in international politics (Waltz, 1986: 336). By comparing behaviour and outcomes within different or similar systems, Waltz argued it was possible to argue that some systems are more stable than others, and that some forms of behaviour are more likely than others (1979).

Thus, the Waltzian revolution in international political theory is the explanation of outcomes and state behaviour through the effects of the distribution of power in the international system, not as a consequence of their internal attributes. For Waltz, to explain international politics by reference to state attributes alone was to pursue a misplaced 'reductionism', an error he had laid at the door of previous realist scholars in his first book, *Man the State and War* (1959). While the high parsimony of the theory considerably restricts how much it can say in general terms about international politics, Waltz claimed that it would cast light on 'a small number of big and important things' (Waltz, 1986: 329).

Waltz was careful, however, not to replace reductionism to the state level with structural determinism at the system level. He argued that actual empirical outcomes in international politics must always be explained as the result of interactions between unit level and structural causes, and accepted that domestic causes can and do matter in the explanation of specific historical outcomes (1996). More fundamentally, it is this interaction that is responsible for certain tendencies in outcomes and state behaviour. Like the concept of a market in economics, system structure emerges from the interaction of otherwise autonomous units and then in turn exerts independent effects upon them as a social structure, whereby it 'constrains them from taking certain actions while propelling them toward others' (1991: 74). In this sense, 'neorealism is a far richer sociological theory of international politics than its critics and defenders usually realise' (Goddard and Nexon, 2005: 10). The behaviour of units in an anarchic system, exemplified in their tendency to 'self-help', is explained as a process of socialisation through competition and emulation of the success of others, which leads over time to functional similarities (1979: 97). The challenge of neorealist explanation is to distinguish between systemic and unit-level causes of outcomes in international politics and

isolate the role of a structure that does not determine but 'mediates the outcomes that states produce' (Waltz, 1991: 36).

There are two further aspects of Waltz's theory that are of importance to this thesis and the phenomenon of military capability mutualisation. First, it is important to be clear about the Waltzian conception of sovereignty, sometimes defined as autonomy<sup>7</sup>. For Waltz, it is intrinsic to a unit that it is autonomous in the fundamental sense that the *raison d'être* is to survive as an independent entity. But sovereignty is not equivalent to an absence of constraint on their actions. Even the largest states are constantly constrained by the actions of others and the dynamics of the system itself. Thus, for Waltz,

'To say that states are sovereign is not to say that they can do as they please, that they are free of others' influence, that they are able to get what they want.' (1979: 96)

On the contrary, sovereignty and dependence 'are not contradictory conditions'. To be 'sovereign' simply means that a state can,

'decide for itself how it will cope with its internal and external problems, including whether or not to seek assistance from others and in doing so to limit its freedom by making commitments to them' (1979:96).

Waltz thus presents a minimalist conception of sovereignty as a capacity for strategic decision-making. This does not equate to the absence of constraints or potential dependencies, but rather reflects the ability of a state to freely decide to enter into restraining commitments. This thesis will define sovereignty, or what we might call 'sovereignty-autonomy', as a form of strategic autonomy. This allows for a distinction between sovereignty-autonomy and specific incidences wherein a state may have a preference for more or less autonomy. It will be seen that, contrary to the claims of some scholars, neorealism does not imply that states seek to 'maximise autonomy' (Baumann, 2001); as Waltz explains above, there is no such assumption in

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<sup>7</sup> Waltz himself was not consistent throughout his writings on this point. He used the word sovereignty in *Theory of International Politics* (1979: 96) and subsequently switched to autonomy (1991: 37 fn. 37).

neorealist thought. In fact, in concrete areas of vital security policy states may do precisely the opposite and create dependencies.

Secondly, however, while states may 'limit their freedom' by making commitments to one another, those commitments are necessarily temporally and materially limited. Due to the uncertainty of the future actions of other states under anarchy, and the resulting need for self-help and the avoidance of 'relative gains' by others, Waltz explicitly rules out the possibility that greater economic efficiency can be gained through the specialisation of functions in the provision of a state's security. Specialisation can only occur *within* units where the organising principle is one of hierarchy rather than anarchy (Waltz, 1979). Thus, 'The domestic imperative is "specialize!"... the international imperative is "take care of yourself!"' (Waltz, 1979: 107). States will fear that even if cooperation may hold out the possibility of efficiency gains for them, it may leave another state in a relatively better position; thus, the logic of the system deters states from cooperation for efficiency through specialisation. Where autonomy may be compromised by making commitments to others, it is for security, not for efficiency.

### *Critics of neorealism - extending its purview*

From the foregoing explication of neorealism's theoretical components, it has been shown that Waltz's theory presents a parsimonious model for the analysis of international politics. It is an approach that offers explanations for recurrent patterns in similar structural conditions and for divergent patterns in different structural conditions. It can make macro claims regarding the tendency of behaviour and outcomes in certain systems, such as stability and the likelihood of war (Waltz, 1979). It also provides a framework for analysis when examining particular empirical outcomes to assess the extent to which cause can be attributed to system or unit levels. It is not, however, without controversy. There are four major criticisms of Waltz's theory: its apparently ahistorical approach; an indeterminacy when applied to empirical cases; insensitivity to important non-structural systemic changes; and, finally, the ambiguity of its philosophical or meta-theoretical assumptions.

The first criticism is that neorealism is a crudely 'ahistorical' approach, and that despite Waltz's arguments to the contrary, it does lean towards a kind of structural determinism (Ashley, 1986). Waltz argued that the theory captured some fundamentals of international politics but did not deny that the theory would only have relevance 'as long as the conditions it contemplates endure in their essentials' (1986: 340). He also argued that critics misunderstood the purpose of the theory when applied to actual historical events (Waltz, 1996: 56). The theory is so abstracted, incomplete and simplified that it cannot possibly be a *representation* of historical reality. It therefore makes little sense to criticise its ahistorical nature; the analytical core of neorealism as a theory is abstract units and systems, not real states and their interactions. As will be considered in more detail in the next chapter, when using neorealism, theory and historical actuality must be considered distinct.

Secondly, a related criticism is that neorealism suffers from an essential indeterminacy when deployed against empirical actuality, and cannot make consistent predictions (Ruggie, 1986). Waltz never claimed, however, that the theory could by itself predict or completely explain any particular historical outcomes in international politics. Indeed, he argued that this criticism confuses theory with analysis; indeterminacy is simply a feature of the theory (1986: 343). Unit-level factors will always be important in an explanation and thus, 'Much is included in an analysis; little is included in a theory' (1996: 56). The third, and perhaps more constructive criticism of Waltz's theory, is that it is too parsimonious and thus limited in its insights into international politics. Fellow neorealist scholar Glenn Snyder argued that while 'it is unfair and naive to criticize neorealism for not explaining everything', its parsimony does tend to heavily restrict its application to a wider variety of empirical outcomes and phenomena (1996: 167). Snyder sought to respond to the charge that neorealism is 'insensitive to change' because changes in structure are infrequent. Changes 'within the system', in terms of shifting alliances, wars and so forth, are more frequent, but structure may have little or nothing to say about them.

In an important development for neorealism, and one that is essential for the theoretical approach to be set out in this thesis, Snyder responded to Waltz's high parsimony by attempting an elaboration of neorealist theory, which, while retaining

its core theoretical assumptions would expand its purview to further areas of analysis. This would be made possible by considering the 'process' by which structural effects and some unit-level attributes are transferred to state interactions and outcomes. At the heart of this process, Snyder claimed, is the role of variables that make up the 'relationships' or 'situational contexts' for interactions between states. These relationships 'exist prior to behavioral interaction, and as the background context of continuing interaction' (1996: 171). It is through relationships that 'structural effects and unit attributes make themselves felt on behavior' (1996: 172). Snyder classifies these 'relational' or 'process' variables that make up relationships or 'situational contexts' as *alignments*, *interests*, *interdependence* and *capabilities*. He argues that these concepts are 'familiar' to neorealism but are yet to find their 'logical niche' within the theory (1996: 172). Indeed, while they are not analytical terms within the purview of Waltzian neorealism, they play an important role in Waltz's explication of his empirical analyses in *Theory of International Politics*. And arguably, they are logical extensions of existing Waltzian concepts. Alignment and interdependence deal with relationships within the system, while Snyder's focus on capability in terms of function adds a different dimension to a key Waltzian variable. Finally, interests are conceived of as 'ends', and, at least in this thesis, will be defined as ultimately related to the end of 'survival'<sup>8</sup>. As Jack Donelley notes, Snyder's variables are 'no less systemic than the distribution of capabilities' (2009: 47).

First, *alignment*, often but not always in the form of a formal alliance between states, is considered by Snyder as the 'preeminent' variable. This is because alignments are 'akin to structure' in that like structure they reflect the arrangement of states in relation to each other within the system. They are 'affected by structure but are not constitutive of structure' (1996: 175), but still exert their own 'independent effects'. Snyder defines alignments as 'expectations of future support'; they determine 'the focus and significance of other relationship variables' (1996: 173). To illustrate the concept, Snyder identifies a particularly important independent effect of alignments, which is that they,

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<sup>8</sup> As will be explained below, the theory to be set out here departs from Snyder's theory in relation to the definition of interests.

'often modify sharply the consequences of system structure. For instance, the concern about 'relative gain', which is, in general, a consequence of anarchy, is far less among allies than it is between opponents.' (1996: 175)

Thus, a diminution in concern over relative gains can be an effect of alignment. The dynamics of any particular alignment remains, however, shaped by the polarity of the system. It may be that, for example, while the concern over relative gain is mitigated by alignment under all polarity types, it is particularly strongly mitigated within the stable and heavily capability-asymmetric relationship of a bipolar alliance, an important claim that the thesis will return to below. Likewise, the level of interdependence between states can be attributed to capability symmetry or asymmetry among allies. Thus, for example, Snyder argues that the 'process' by which a multi-polar system structure made the First World War even more likely was the high equality between allies and thus high levels of interdependence inside the opposing alliances, leaving them at the mercy of each other's own particular interests, and ultimately dragging them into a system-wide war (1996: 185).

Secondly, Snyder claims that the extent to which *interests* between states are in harmony or in conflict also constitutes a relationship, conceived of as a situational context. Shared interests, for example, may help explain the longevity of an alliance even when a structural cause is hard to locate. Indeed, as will be seen, both Snyder and Waltz point to enduring interests as an explanation for the continuation of NATO following the collapse of the bipolar Cold War system. Snyder concedes that defining state interests is 'notoriously difficult' (1996: 176). And, under Waltzian neorealism, the assumption must be that interests are located at the unit level. However, Snyder argues that some state interests are shaped by both structure and existing relationships. Alignments, for example, often lead to the interests of one state becoming entwined with another. Thus, there is a strong logic for arguing that the distribution of interests, and whether they are aligned or not, can legitimately be considered, at least in part, at the system level. Snyder's definition of the types of interests is, however, complex (1996: 175). He divides interests into 'instrumental', 'strategic' and 'intrinsic', and then into 'general' (i.e., systemic) and 'particular' (Snyder, 1996: 175-180). In particular, he takes on 'value' interests, which creates problems for the parsimonious deployment of the theory. Accordingly, this thesis will

take a simpler approach to interests than that undertaken by Snyder; this approach will be set out below in more detail.

Thirdly, Snyder also takes a novel approach to the role of capabilities in neorealist theory. Under Waltz's theory, the distribution of capabilities throughout a system determines the number of great powers and therefore its structure. While retaining this conception in relation to structure, Snyder argues that the *function* of different military capabilities, i.e., what they can do in relation to another state's capabilities, can also be considered as constituting a relationship between states (1996: 180). Borrowing the term 'asset specificity' from economics, Snyder argues that,

'Different types of military forces will have different kinds of utility against different opponents, or different values in an alliance, just as the specific assets of firms will affect the kind of relationship they develop with other firms.' (1996: 181)

This notion of the variable 'value' of different capabilities within an alliance is clearly of potential importance to the study of states seeking to cooperate with each other over a given military capability. If states wish to cooperate over the generation of new equipment, for example, it is an obvious requirement that they both have a requirement for such equipment and can afford to develop the capability. The significance of this conception of capability will be considered in the final section of this chapter.

Snyder's conceptualisation of relationship variables is systemic rather than unit-level because it concerns their configuration across the system. These relationships go, however, further than Waltz's parsimonious insistence that only the distribution of capabilities in terms of power should be included; attributes otherwise considered to be 'unit-level' can be brought up to the system level where they constitute a relationship. For Snyder, however, 'preferences, perceptions and politics' still remain at the unit-level; by leaving these internal factors that influence how states come to decisions in particular instances at the unit level, some degree of parsimony and



distinction between levels may be retained. An adaptation of Snyder's schema is set out in table 2.1 below.<sup>9</sup>

<i>Unit attributes</i>	<i>Structure</i>	<i>Relationships</i>
Preferences	Anarchy	Alignment
Perceptions	Polarity	Interests
Politics	Structural modifiers <sup>10</sup>	Capability
		Interdependence

**Table 2.1. Snyder's table of system, structure and relationship variables (Snyder, 1996:174).**

Finally, it is important to note that as with Waltz's conception of structure, Snyder attributes causal powers or 'independent effects' to relationships or process variables. This is a significant ontological issue that raises the fourth and final criticism of neorealism. A fundamental critique of the theory, and one that is equally applicable to Snyder's concept of relationships, is that the ontological status of Waltz's 'shaping and shoving' structural forces is highly ambiguous (Wight, 2006: 98). As Colin Wight argues, 'there are interesting questions as to how something which does not really exist can 'shape and shove' anything' (2006, 97).

In large part due to this ontological ambiguity Waltz has variously been claimed for a wide and incompatible range of philosophical schools and methodological approaches including positivism, a Weberian 'ideal type' approach, constructivism and critical realism<sup>11</sup>. Several scholars, including Wight, have argued that Waltz is 'instrumentalist' in his use of theory and therefore *not* ontologically realist. Even this claim, however, is difficult to establish against the text of *Theory of International Politics*. Waltz did indeed claim that his theory was 'instrumental' (1991), but it is not clear that this amounts to a total rejection of an ontologically 'real' approach. Indeed, without the assertion that systems and structures have independent effects or real 'emergent properties', it is difficult to see how Waltz's theory can claim philosophical coherence when applied to empirical actuality. These issues, and their methodological implications will be addressed in greater detail in the following

<sup>9</sup> Adapted from Snyder's figure.

<sup>10</sup> Snyder argues that certain forms of technology such as nuclear weapons act as structural modifiers (1996: 168); this thesis does not deploy the concept of structural modifier, though it could be argued that the increasing cost of military capability meets the criteria.

<sup>11</sup> These critiques will be considered in the following chapter.

chapter. For now, it will suffice to assume that neorealism is based on a very narrow and analytical ontological realism, and that the claim that social relations produce emergent properties that then influence such relations independently of individual actors is critical to the proper deployment of neorealism. The implications of these philosophical issues for methodology will be examined in the next chapter.

The previous paragraphs have set out the theory of neorealism and described how it can be augmented by the addition of Snyder's process variables based on a conception of relationships as situational contexts. It is now necessary to turn to the field of European defence cooperation and existing literature that has attempted to explain it through neorealist analysis. In explicating the strengths and flaws of contemporary theoretical analyses, the following section will demonstrate why a new theoretical perspective is necessary and how it can help to explain occurrences of the mutualisation of military capabilities.

## **ii. Neorealism and defence cooperation**

### *Defence cooperation – the aggregation and mutualisation of capabilities*

As noted by Snyder, military capability can be defined in two different ways by neorealists. First, in the Waltzian sense of determining the structure of a system via the distribution of capability as a 'power resource'<sup>12</sup> among states, and secondly as constituting a relationship between partners regarding the particular function of capability (1996: 180). And indeed, in empirical actuality defence ministries generally consider military capability in this way in terms of 'what it can do' or as a 'function', and not simply in terms of 'platform' or 'equipment'. Defence ministry definitions of capability also go further than function alone and into the 'value chain' or process of its development. The British Ministry of Defence, for example, defines military capability as,

'the combination of equipment, trained personnel and support that gives the armed forces the capacity to achieve the tasks they are given.' (UK MOD, 2014: 8)

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<sup>12</sup> Snyder argues for a definition of Waltzian capability as 'power resource' to distinguish between his own and Waltz's definition.

In the UK the process of generation and development is known as ‘defence lines of development’ or DLODs (UK MOD, 2014: 8)<sup>13</sup>, which encompass ‘training, equipment, personnel, information, doctrine and concepts, organisation, infrastructure and logistics’. To the best knowledge of the author, the importance of this conception of capability, in terms of generation as well as deployment, has been rather overlooked in academic discussions of defence cooperation. To consider capability in this way is thus to consider not merely cooperation over capability at frontline deployment, but right back through the capability chain, from conception and development of function, right through support, and on to frontline use.

It will be argued that there are two principal rationales for defence cooperation, one relating to the aggregation of military capabilities and the other to their mutualisation between states. Regarding the first rationale, neorealist theory assumes that the role of an alliance is to aggregate military capability to balance or overmatch rival power. Seen through this lens, defence cooperation can be explained as interactions between states with the aim of making aggregated forces function effectively. This might be achieved through the definition and agreement of a joint politico-military strategy, through joint command and control arrangements and, in some cases, through the interoperability of capabilities<sup>14</sup>. European defence cooperation, whether through NATO, the EU or bilaterally, features these elements.

By contrast, capability mutualisation goes beyond the aggregation of autonomous forces and into the realm of cooperation for efficiency. Sharing or specialisation in elements of military capabilities can deliver significant efficiencies in their generation and operation, as states no longer need to fund all elements of the capability alone. In mutualising elements of their capabilities, however, partner states must accept that there will be a diminution of their autonomous control over capabilities. Among European states, mutualisation may or may not be associated with the EU and NATO; indeed, such cooperation tends to be arranged on a bilateral or small group

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<sup>13</sup> Other defence ministries use different classifications. The US and other European states use a similar approach with DOTMILPF, which stands for doctrine, organisation, training, material, leadership, personnel and facilities. The differences between different national approaches are not important for the purposes of this thesis.

<sup>14</sup> Although it should be noted that interoperability of capabilities assumes a certain degree of interdependence because it entails some sharing of knowledge over the use of a capability.

basis. Such a definition does not necessarily entail the complete mutualisation of an entire military capability from its earliest stages of generation through to frontline deployment, although this is not, in principle, impossible. More often, however, mutual dependence between states for a given capability will be found at a point or points through generation to deployment along the capability value chain or DLODs. This includes areas such as the specialisation of elements of research and development, industrial production or the sharing of assets such as a training facility. Though examples are scarce, as will be seen, mutualisation can also occur on the frontline, when the capability is in immediate deployment, such as under a bilateral agreement for the mutualisation of capabilities to defend territorial airspace.

The difference between these two rationales for defence cooperation lies in both the level of autonomy sacrificed by such arrangements and their aims. In line with neorealist assumptions about the ephemeral, non-structural nature of alliances and 'self-help' behaviour, aggregated forces may be separated quickly, with their equipment and supporting industrial bases remaining completely autonomous after separation. Mutualised capabilities, on the other hand, entail a restriction on autonomy. Thus, whereas aggregation is undertaken in direct support of a state's security policy, mutualisation is concerned rather with improving the economic efficiency of military capabilities and is only indirectly related to security. In empirical actuality, mutualisation and aggregation are more closely related. The former may improve the effectiveness of the latter and may lead to closer cooperation on more strategic levels of politico-military cooperation, which will enable more successful aggregation of capabilities. But, for the purposes of the theoretical approach in this thesis, the two rationales will be dealt with as analytically distinct.

While the aggregation of capabilities is relatively unproblematic, and indeed is specifically accounted for in neorealist balance of power theory, the mutualisation of capabilities presents a theoretical challenge. As explored above, Waltz argued that while the domestic imperative is to specialise, the international imperative is towards self-help (Waltz, 1979: 107). Mutualisation of capabilities involving specialisation and sharing in pursuit of efficiency thus appears to break a fundamental rule of Waltz's neorealism, which is that, 'In a self-help system, considerations of security subordinate economic gain to political interest.' (Waltz, 1979: 107). From a neorealist

perspective, the problem with the mutualisation of military capabilities is that while alliances are assumed to be fundamentally ephemeral, specialisation or sharing will bind states together over a potentially long period of time, quite possibly beyond the foreseeable existence of an alliance. Furthermore, even if interests based on common defence are well-aligned, more idiosyncratic interests are likely to diverge.

Thus, to embark on capability mutualisation could risk a situation with a high risk of either entrapment or abandonment by one or the other partner. There would, for example, be a potentially huge efficiency gain if the UK and France specialised for the provision of a mutualised aircraft carrier strike capability, wherein the UK might provide the aircraft and France the carriers. Yet this would create serious problems for any deployment where the UK and France did not have more-or-less perfectly aligned interests and a reasonable expectation that those interests would remain aligned throughout the deployment of the aircraft carriers. Some of these issues have been addressed in contemporary neorealist scholarship on European defence cooperation, but it will be seen that there are some serious shortcomings in recent applications of the theory. Before setting out a novel neorealist approach to capability mutualisation, this section will therefore now consider some contemporary attempts at neorealist explanation of European defence cooperation.

### *Neorealist perspectives on European defence cooperation*

At the heart of this thesis is the question as to what provides sufficient confidence between states to allow them to mutualise their military capabilities. As noted in the introduction, this question has not been dealt with directly by scholars in any great depth. There are, however, two strands of contemporary academic literature that deal indirectly with this question in relation to European states and the factors that apparently shape their propensity to deploy their armed forces in various contexts. These relate firstly to the European Union's Common Security and Defence Policy (EU CSDP) and its prospects for the future, and secondly, as to why it is that European states have generally, though not wholly consistently, provided support to the US for its 'out of area' missions such as that in Afghanistan.

The challenge for Europeans in deploying aggregated forces, whether in support of the US or without the US on CSDP missions is not necessarily directly linked with issues of capability mutualisation, and few scholars even mention the issue. Yet the two matters are related. In both their support for US-led and CSDP missions, European states see potential advantages, and in the case of CSDP, even a necessity, in deploying their forces in aggregate. And if they could very reliably do so, there would be opportunities for greater efficiency through the mutualisation of their capabilities. If, however, there is uncertainty as to whether two or more European states will deploy their forces together in any given scenario, mutual dependence will be difficult, if not impossible, to achieve. To explain European state behaviour in these circumstances, scholars writing from a neorealist and neoclassical realist perspective have considered the logic of behaviour within certain kinds of alliance and have drawn on Glenn Snyder's notion of an 'alliance security dilemma'. This section will turn first to the issue of aggregation in support for the CSDP and secondly to the reliability of European state support for the US.

The Franco-British St Malo Declaration of 1998 and the subsequent emergence of the CSDP brought new theoretical attention to European defence cooperation (Howorth, 2007: 37; Krotz and Maher, 2011; Bickerton et al, 2011; Meyer and Strickmann, 2011). Scholars have debated how best to explain a security project that breaks with the past in seeking to enable Europeans to launch autonomous action without the United States. The motivation for seeking this apparent autonomy from the US is complex and has been contested by scholars. Was the CSDP created as a European challenge, intentional or otherwise, to US power in the wake of the collapse of Cold War bipolarity? Or was it created, on the contrary, as a means of bolstering the American security guarantee by building up European capabilities and delivering a more effective institutional framework for transatlantic 'burden sharing' (Howorth, 2007: 33-60)?

Scholars who answered the former question affirmatively were quick to draw on neorealist theory to justify their explanation of CSDP. If military alliances form as aggregations of power to balance rival power, then the CSDP might be interpreted *prima facie* as an attempt to aggregate military power for use autonomously to balance American power. It is perhaps understandable that some scholars

interpreted the CSDP as an indication of balancing behaviour, however 'soft' in form. And yet where such an approach has been taken, the application of neorealism has been somewhat inappropriate and rather unconvincing (Posen 2006; Art, 2004). As several scholars have argued persuasively, the empirical evidence of European state behaviour simply does not support the claim (Brooks and Wolhforth, 2005; Howorth and Menon, 2009).

If the aim, then, of this aggregation of military power is not to balance rival power, can neorealism explain the CSDP? To use the theory differently in an attempt to do so, some scholars turned away from a Waltzian balancing argument and towards Glenn Snyder's neorealist approach to alliance politics. Drawing on Waltz's *Theory of International Politics*, Snyder set out what he called the 'alliance security dilemma', positing that states within an alliance fear both entrapment and abandonment by their allies (Snyder, 1984). In a multipolar alliance, the dilemma is acute because alliances are fleeting and ephemeral, and so states fear abandonment. To mitigate that fear they must move closer to an ally by making further commitments. This, however, increases the risk of entrapment into the divergent interests of their ally, hence the dilemma. As will be explored in more detail below, Snyder argues that the dilemma is most acute in a multipolar system where states are highly equal in terms of capabilities, and less so in a bipolar system because the fear of abandonment is far less due to a more stable alignment of allies.

Galia Press-Barnathan has argued that the CSDP is better explained as resulting from this kind of intra-alliance behaviour shaped by the shift from bipolarity to unipolarity following the end of the Cold War (Press-Barnathan, 2006). She draws on Snyder's dilemma to argue that the CSDP can be viewed as the result of European states attempting to concert their individual strategies, which are shaped by the alliance security dilemma. She argues that the shift to a unipolar system structure has increased the intensity of the alliance security dilemma for European states. This is because the risk of abandonment is greater in the absence of a bipolar structural constraint on the US, while entrapment is also more likely given the fewer restraints on its behaviour. Thus, unipolarity becomes more like multipolarity in that the alliance security dilemma is once again high. European defence cooperation thus represents an attempt at a transatlantic 'division of labour' aimed at influencing the US through

improved burden-sharing while also hedging against abandonment. Similarly, others have argued that the CSDP is explained not by balancing but by 'bandwagoning' or 'reformed bandwagoning' behaviour by European states (Dyson, 2013a; Cladi and Locatelli, 2012). Snyder's theory thus presents a plausible alternative explanation for the CSDP as an aggregation of European military capability in support of concerted state strategies aimed at mitigating the alliance security dilemma, and not aimed at balancing the US.

Scholars have, however, recognised that there are inherent limitations on the concerting of European state strategies to pursue an effective 'division of labour' with the US. In order to explain these limitations, both Press-Barnathan and Dyson have drawn on Stephen Walt's 'balance of threat' approach (Press-Banathan, 2006: 276; Dyson, 2013: 389). They argue that divergence in threat perceptions among NATO and EU states explains why it is so difficult to pursue collective strategies consistently. As such, the inability to reliably field multinational forces in support of any 'EU' objective, hampers the ambition to concert national strategies to more effectively mitigate the risks of entrapment and abandonment by the US. Both Dyson and Press-Barnathan contend that it is primarily such divergence in threat perception that thwarts deeper defence cooperation. Press-Barnathan concedes this significant limitation means that,

'The degree of successful implementation of these strategies will depend on the ability of these states to overcome collective-action problems among themselves.'  
(2006: 285)

This fundamental collective action problem undermines attempts at greater efficiency through mutualisation of capabilities at the frontline of operations, which in turn provides an efficiency challenge to the notion of successful autonomous European action. Hence the dilemma for European states over mutualisation of capabilities: if aggregation of military power is necessary to influence the US and more effectively avoid entrapment and provide a hedge against abandonment, it will require efforts to make European defence more efficient through rationalisation. This, however, means more capability specialisation and sharing of assets leading to the mutualisation of particular capabilities. And yet mutually dependent military



capabilities for frontline use must assume a very strong alignment of intent among the partners.

The second strand of literature relates to European NATO state support for US-led missions such as Afghanistan from 2001 and Iraq from 2003 (Von Hlatky, 2013; Davidson, 2011). This literature starts from the puzzle as to why small states within a heavily asymmetric alliance would bother to spend precious resources, life and limb and political capital on supporting the dominant state, particularly when such resources can never make a critical difference to the success of the mission. Economic theory on burden-sharing within alliances suggests that free-riding is the more rational approach, and yet European states have contributed significantly to US-led operations (Olson and Zeckhauser, 1966). The answer, like that provided above by Press-Barnathan, is that by contributing to US-led missions, European states are seeking to extend their political influence; in Snyder's terms, they are seeking to mitigate the risks of entrapment by the dominant state. Again, however, due to divergent policies, European states rarely act in exactly the same way vis-à-vis the dominant state, and so reliable aggregation of their forces, and therefore their mutualisation, remains difficult if not impossible.

While Press-Barnathan and Dyson argue that the balance of threat explains divergences in support among European states for the CSDP, Stephanie von Hlatky notes that in relation to European state support for the US, the explanation has significant drawbacks (2013: 27). The alignment or non-alignment of threat perception is not the sole, nor necessarily the most important variable to consider when states decide to deploy their armed forces. Indeed, following the logic of the alliance security dilemma in a unipolar alliance, whereby a desire for influence over the dominant state strongly shapes the behaviour of subordinate states, decisions to support the US over a given operation may not in fact reflect a threat perception within a subordinate state. Such decisions may instead be taken to support the US to attempt to gain influence over a particular operation and therefore mitigate entrapment risks. Von Hlatky and others have argued convincingly, for example, that European military deployments to Afghanistan following the 911 terror attacks against the US were not undertaken solely or even primarily to respond to the perceived threat of Al Qaeda to European states, but rather to demonstrate loyalty to

the US and therefore bolster other aspects of the alliance and maintain influence (Eilstrupp-Sangiovanni, 2014: 93; Davidson, 2011: 106-116; Shapiro and Witney, 2009: 37). Others have noted the importance of such a strategy to the UK (Wallace and Phillips 2009; Gray, 2008). Thus, subordinate states 'will consider making a military contribution even if they do not share the American perception of threat' (Von Hlatky, 2013: 139).

Thus, while threat perception remains an important factor, a range of other 'unit-level' variables must be considered in any explanation as to why European states diverge in their support, either for CSDP or US-led missions. The system-level dynamics of an asymmetric alliance are crucial for understanding how the smaller states come to understand their own threat perception, but it is not in itself a sufficient explanatory framework. This leads von Hlatky to depart from neorealism and take a 'neoclassical realist' approach, drawing on both systemic and unit-level variables in a synthesis of explanation for particular historical cases. Others also pursue this approach; in a similar theme on European state support for US-led missions, Jason Davidson also adopts neoclassical realism (2011), as does Dyson for his work on European defence cooperation (2010; 2013b). This turn to neoclassical realism appears to take neorealism to a dead-end; even with the perspective of Snyder's alliance security dilemma, there do not seem to be any reliable variables at the systemic level that will explain when and why allies might have sufficient confidence to enter into military cooperation, either over a CSDP or US-led mission. This also represents a methodological problem in that neoclassical realism is ill-equipped to explain the variation in occurrence of a systemic phenomenon, which is the aim of this thesis. As Taliaferro et al argue,

'Neoclassical realism seeks to explain variation in the foreign policies of the same state over time or across different states facing similar external constraints. It makes no pretence about explaining patterns of systemic or recurring outcomes' (2009: 21).

By extension, if no such reliable systemic variables exist to explain variation in the collective deployment of European forces in these contexts, it might be concluded that no such variables exist for explaining when and why allies would feel sufficiently confident to embark on military capability mutualisation.

The final challenge to a neorealist theory of capability mutualisation relates to neorealism's apparent prohibition on specialisation over security matters as discussed above. It might be argued that the variation in European state support for the CSDP and US-led missions simply reflects the fact that they are sovereign-autonomous units in a condition of anarchy. While they may seek to create a collective alliance strategy because that best deals with the alliance security dilemma with the US, they cannot do so effectively because their inherent preference for autonomy prevents them from doing so to any great degree. Jolyon Howorth and Anand Menon reach a similar conclusion when arguing against the view that common EU defence and security policies can be explained as 'soft balancing' against the US. They argue that balancing cannot occur through the CSDP because it is 'not merely a limited undertaking, but a *structurally limited* undertaking.' (2009: 741) They argue that because European states wish to retain their sovereignty in this sensitive field, concerted strategies are highly restricted, and that 'a logic of international politics applies *within* the EU in much the same way as it does in its relations with the outside world' (2009: 741). Yet while this may indeed be the case within EU institutional structures, as has been outlined in the first chapter, European states have in some discrete areas opted for to mutualise aspects of their military capabilities.

Thus, there are three major problems within existing literature on defence cooperation from a neorealist perspective. The first is that the neorealist analyses considered above have focussed on explaining variation in the aggregation of deployed armed forces. Thus, while it may be an appropriate framework by which to consider, by extension, an explanation for the occurrence and variation in capability mutualisation on the frontline, it does not capture those aspects of capability at greater temporal and functional remove from the frontline, such as defence industrial cooperation or maintenance support arrangements. And neither does the current literature make any attempt to explain these forms of mutualisation. Secondly, it has been seen that within existing neorealist literature there is apparently no system-level variable that can explain the variation in support among European states either for US-led missions or for each other. Finally, for some scholars, the logic of international politics itself appears to provide a logical obstruction to the possibility of

capability mutualisation. These issues will now be dealt with in the final section below, which will attempt to produce a neorealist theory that can explain variation in the occurrence and form of cases of capability mutualisation across European states.

### **iii. A neorealist theory of military capability mutualisation**

The previous section has shown that existing neorealist explanations of defence cooperation have significant shortcomings, particularly in terms of explaining very close cooperation such as the mutualisation of military capabilities. The final section of this chapter will therefore set out an innovative theoretical approach which, while preserving assumptions and concepts familiar to neorealism, will attempt to provide a more convincing explanation. To do this, it will be necessary to develop a model of the system-level effects that shape the occurrences and particular forms of capability mutualisation. This will be done by conceiving of two configurations of system-level variables that shape behaviour within a heavily asymmetric bipolar or unipolar alliance. The first configuration, which is concerned with the dynamics of relationships between dominant and subordinate states under a bipolar or unipolar alliance, will be called the *asymmetric alliance configuration*. The second, which describes the dynamics of bilateral or small group relationships of subordinate states within such an alliance, will be called the *local alliance configuration*. Taken together, these configurations encapsulate the systemic pressures and tendencies that provide the situational context for capability mutualisation, and thus help to explain its occurrence and variable form.

The following section will draw on the work of Waltz and Snyder to identify two crucial effects that can be ascribed to the asymmetric alliance configuration that will be detailed below. First, the structural effects of bipolarity or unipolarity, taken together with the very high capability asymmetry between the dominant and subordinate states, means that the military capability of subordinate states is of relatively little consequence at the systemic level. In such a situation, where one state holds greatly predominant power compared to its allies, the effect is to reduce politico-military interdependence, which in turn leads to significant policy flexibility. Secondly, a bipolar or unipolar structure, taken together with an alignment of vital

interests between the dominant and subordinate states leads to alliance durability, and thus to high expectations of long-term mutual support. It will be seen that these two effects are of critical importance to the form and likelihood of capability mutualisation.

First, as there is low pressure for allies to support each other across their divergent interests, low interdependence is likely to hinder capability mutualisation at the operational or 'frontline' level because such cooperation would lead to a high risk of entrapment or abandonment. However, because low interdependence leads to high policy flexibility, there is considerable scope for flexibility in the way in which states can deploy military capabilities to support their allies; thus, there may be mutualisation in those capabilities, or aspects of capabilities, that function at distance from the frontline. Second, expectations of alliance durability provide for sufficient confidence to allow for aspects of mutualisation to develop at a temporal distance from the frontline (e.g., defence industrial collaboration). Finally, alliance durability may provide the confidence that where concrete interests tend to be rigid in their alignment, states may protect them with mutualised capabilities.

It is this intra-alliance interplay between low interdependence and high durability that marks out the asymmetric alliance configuration, and which, it will be argued, can explain much about the way in which subordinate states generate, use and cooperate over their military capabilities. The following paragraphs will now set out in more detail the claim that the asymmetric alliance configuration provides these conditions of low interdependence and alliance durability. The final paragraphs of this section will then describe how these theoretical insights can be used to underpin a model that can explain variation in occurrence and forms of military capability mutualisation in contemporary Europe.

### *Interdependence within alliances*

In *Theory of International Politics*, Waltz made two important theoretical claims regarding the effects of system structure on state behaviour and outcomes within alliances. Snyder subsequently built on these claims in his own work by developing the idea of 'the alliance security dilemma' and subsequently that of relationship

variables. The first claim relates to the impact of system structure on politico-military interdependence within alliances; the second relates to the impact of structure on the durability of alliances and thus on relative gains concerns and the security dilemma. For Waltz, these two systemic effects can be attributed to a bipolar system structure. Following Snyder, however, they can also be explicated by considering relationship variables in conjunction with structure. Hence, this thesis develops the concept of 'structural-relational configurations' that provide a 'shaping and shoving' situational context for unit action.

First, regarding interdependence within alliances, Waltz argued that in an alliance under a multipolar structure, politico-military interdependence is high, and under a bipolar structure it is low (Waltz, 1979: 169). This is because in a multipolar structure a balance of power is brought about by the formation of capability-aggregating alliances, a phenomenon that Waltz terms 'external balancing' by states. Because balancing alliances can be made up of different potential groupings of great powers, however, there is a high risk of the defection of allies from one alliance to another. This 'flexibility of alignment' thus encourages 'rigidity of strategy' because states are under pressure to honour their allies' interests as well as their own. Thus, politico-military interdependence is high because one state's otherwise idiosyncratic interests can quickly become a critical policy matter to all allies and may risk triggering a conflict. In Waltz's words, allies cannot afford 'to advertise their disunity by failing to back a venture even while deploring its risks' (Waltz, 1988: 621)

Snyder took these observations on the rigidity and flexibility of alignment and strategy and used them to underpin what he called 'the alliance security dilemma' (1984: 494)<sup>15</sup>. In a multipolar alliance, flexibility of alignment and rigidity of strategy create an acute dilemma over how to behave towards allies. Move too close to an ally and risk being entrapped into their divergent interests; move too far away and risk abandonment. Snyder departed from Waltz, however, in arguing that the nature of the alliance security dilemma was not only a function of system structure but could also be affected by intra-alliance relationship variables. Thus, the greater the equality

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<sup>15</sup> Snyder acknowledges his debt to Waltz on this point.

of state capability within an alliance, the higher the level of interdependence and thus the intensity of the alliance security dilemma (1996: 185).

Under a bipolar structure, by contrast, there are only two great powers and so balancing is undertaken 'internally' (i.e., through domestic resources) rather than 'externally' (i.e., through capability aggregation in an alliance). It is this feature, according to Waltz, that makes a bipolar system inherently more stable. Under bipolarity, there is no structural imperative for great powers to aggregate their forces with others because relative to other states they are powerful enough to rely on internal balancing alone (1979, 168). Thus, alliances under bipolarity become in effect 'treaties of guarantee' by the dominant states to their subordinate allies (Waltz, 2000: 19; Snyder, 1984: 486). And, for the following reasons, politico-military interdependence is low between such allies. First, the defection of a subordinate ally to the other great power would make no real difference to the balance of power, and so the dominant state has less to fear from abandonment. Second, there is little advantage anyway in a subordinate state doing so because it will exert no greater influence over the rival superpower than its current ally. And finally, great powers hold high leverage over the actions of their lesser allies and would probably act to dissuade a subordinate state from defection. In short, there is little to gain from abandonment.

Thus, a 'rigidity of alignment' arises and this in turn creates a 'flexibility of strategy' in the behaviour of both the dominant and subordinate states in the alliance; there is a certain tolerance of 'unilateral' behaviour because subordinates can, to a large degree, take their protection for granted (Waltz, 1979: 168-170). And, so long as they do not transgress the interests of the dominant power, subordinates can choose their own policies for managing their relationship with the dominant power and securing their interests without creating interdependencies with their subordinate allies. As Waltz argues,

'In alliances among unequals, the contributions of the lesser members are at once wanted and of relatively small importance. In alliances among unequals, alliance leaders need worry little about the faithfulness of their followers, who usually have little choice anyway.' (Waltz, 1988: 621).

Again, building on Waltz's structural claims, Snyder argued that the alliance security dilemma is weak under bipolarity because entrapment, of the political if not always the military kind, is clearly the predominant risk for the subordinate states (1984, 483). Not only is the risk of abandonment low, but there is little that subordinate states can do to avoid or mitigate it by offer of military support since their own capability is of such little consequence to the balance of power. As such, there is little tension between the risks of entrapment and abandonment, and therefore a far less acute dilemma. The best means of mitigating the inevitable entrapment risk is thus not necessarily to 'move away' but rather to boost influence over the dominant in any way possible. This may include 'moving closer' (Snyder, 1997: 185), a strategy that simultaneously bolsters the alliance's political cohesion and helps reduce the risk, albeit already low, of abandonment. On the other hand, given that the risk of abandonment is low and subordinate state military capability is not decisive to the balance of power, support for the dominant state need not be absolute nor always in the same form; the way in which it is provided, whether in military, economic or diplomatic form, can be undertaken with considerable flexibility.

Regarding the role of interests in an asymmetric alliance, Waltz did not attempt to integrate a formal conceptualisation of state interests into his theory, but he did bring the concept into his analyses of empirical case studies in the latter chapters of *Theory of International Politics*. He argued that there are 'negative' and 'positive' interests. And that,

'Alliances are made by states that have some but not all of their interests in common. The common interest is ordinarily a negative one: fear of other states. Divergence comes when positive interests are at issue.' (1979, 166)

Waltz did not expand on this distinction in relation to the effects of different forms of system structure on interests, but it may be helpful to conclude the foregoing paragraphs by attempting to do so here. Under a multipolar alliance, while negative interests are central to the purpose of an alliance, positive interests are logically more peripheral. As seen above, however, under given circumstances positive



interests can become, by extension, alliance-wide interests<sup>16</sup>. For a bipolar alliance, negative interests are equally vital to alliance cohesion. Positive interests, however, do not present the same risk of entrapment under bipolarity and can be dealt with through the greater flexibility of strategy inherent in the alliance. Thus, it can be assumed that where allies in a bipolar alliance have shared negative interests, close cooperation over military matters is less problematic. On the other hand, where they have divergent positive or idiosyncratic interests, deep military cooperation will be very difficult because of the greater flexibility in strategy. And, given that the same military capabilities will usually need to be available to defend both negative and positive interests, it will be very difficult to align them even where negative interests are closely shared.

Positive and negative interests also help clarify the way in which politico-military interdependence is low in a bipolar alliance. Although subordinate states depend heavily on the dominant state for their security, they expect to have their negative interests defended automatically and not to have to support all the many positive interests of the dominant state to the same degree or intensity that they would under a multipolar alliance. This situation also means that politico-military interdependence between the subordinate states themselves, viewed as a group apart from the dominant state, is very low because they do not rely on each other for their security.

Both Waltz and Snyder deployed this theoretical approach to explain the impact of Cold War bipolarity on interdependence between European NATO states. For Waltz, low interdependence due to the asymmetry of power in a bipolar alliance explained, for example, why European states have historically been reluctant to respond to US pressure to spend more on defence,

‘Some European states could afford to do more. The additional contribution that any of them might make, however, would have little impact’ (Waltz, 1979: 207)

The theoretical assertion that subordinate states in a bipolar asymmetric alliance have high flexibility of strategy also allowed Waltz to explain why France could leave

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<sup>16</sup> The assassination of the Archduke Ferdinand in Sarajevo in 1914 is perhaps the classic example of an apparently idiosyncratic event of only local relevance sparking off war across a multipolar system.

NATO command structures without significantly undermining the alliance. De Gaulle was simply using the opportunity presented by flexibility of strategy to seek leverage by distance from the US as a 'third force', a notably different approach from the British strategy of remaining as close as possible to Washington (1979, 169). A further example, though not cited by Waltz, is the British reaction to US pressure for a military contribution to the Vietnam War. The UK was entrapped into political support for the war, but because its military capability would not make any decisive military difference to its ally, it was able to withhold support for this 'positive' US interest. Beyond the Cold War, when extra-European expeditionary operations multiplied, this unilateralist behaviour continued in the splintering of European NATO state support for US interests, for example, in both Gulf Wars of 1991 and 2003, in Libya in 2011 and Syria in 2013. The reason for the continuation of this 'bipolar' behaviour beyond the collapse of the Cold War will be considered in more detail below.

This use of military capabilities to support the dominant state and mitigate entrapment through what Robert Jervis has called the 'struggle for influence' is the primary subordinate state behaviour in the asymmetric alliance configuration (Jervis, 2011: 276). It might be objected that a more compelling reason for subordinate states to generate and deploy military capabilities is to provide capability to the dominant state not for influence but rather to avoid the risk of abandonment. And indeed, in relation to NATO, this is the essence of the longstanding 'burden sharing' argument, where European states are routinely accused of free-riding on American military power (Gates, 2010)<sup>17</sup>. It would probably not be empirically sustainable to argue that there is zero impact from demands by Washington for European states to increase defence spending and do more on military operations. But is it generally more plausible that Europeans generate and deploy military capabilities to avoid abandonment caused by American frustration over low spending? Such a claim would have to be examined empirically in any given case. What is important to make clear here, however, is that according to the theory outlined above, it would not make sense for states to fear abandonment for such a reason. Under the theory outlined above, the dominant state protects subordinate states not because they are making

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<sup>17</sup> For example, former US Defence Secretary Robert Gates argued in 2010 that there was an ongoing 'de-militarisation of Europe', which threatened NATO.

a military contribution but because it is in its interests to do so. And this will be so regardless of how much the subordinate states spend on military capabilities, recalling that in an asymmetric alliance, those contributions are regarded as almost, though never entirely, inconsequential.

Furthermore, if for any reason the dominant state decided it was not in its interests to defend the subordinate states, the level of their military contribution could be trebled or even quadrupled and logically it would make no difference to the decision. That said, the 'struggle for influence' might usefully be considered in broad reputational terms, i.e., in that a reputation for loyalty, reliability and contribution in military matters may simultaneously assuage both the entrapment and abandonment risk. But from the theoretical perspective outlined here, subordinate state responses to calls for greater 'burden sharing' are better explained as diplomatic politesse or as motivated by a desire to retain influence, rather than a fear of abandonment; so long as abandonment is unlikely the preeminent strategic end of subordinate states will be that of mitigating entrapment (Bird, 2013: 119)<sup>18</sup>.

To conclude, the significance of low politico-military interdependence between subordinate states, and the resultant high flexibility of strategy for dealing with the positive or idiosyncratic interests of the dominant state, is that there is little systemic pressure to support each other over the dominant state's own positive interests. Thus, while subordinate states may share very closely their negative interests, on the crucial matter of the positive interests of the dominant state, or indeed of each other, there is significant flexibility. More generally, however, this logic of the struggle for influence is shared across subordinate states. Thus, there is a rationale for concerting influencing strategies where possible, but also a very significant constraint in that there is considerable uncertainty over whether, when and how subordinate states will align in their support for any concrete interest of the dominant state.

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<sup>18</sup> Tim Bird has argued convincingly that a perennial issue such as burden sharing is simply a 'constitutive' feature of NATO.

### *The durability of alliances*

Waltz made a second important claim about the effects of structure on alliances, again developed by Snyder, and that is the way in which the bipolar structure enables subordinate states to engage in deep cooperation by mitigating the effects of anarchy and relative gains concerns. Waltz noted that in the case of Western Europe under bipolarity its states could not effectively balance US power without amalgamation into a super-state, a possible development, but one that would breach the assumption that they seek to 'survive' as independent units (1979: 180). The subordinate state position does, however, come with an important structural advantage, and this is that the overwhelming power of the US means that Europeans no longer need to concern themselves with balancing each other. The suppression of balancing means there is no longer a security dilemma between subordinate states, or at least its significance is heavily diminished. Anarchy remains the condition of the international system at large, but the stability of bipolarity leads to rigidity of alignment, which for European states means something close to an absence of anarchy between themselves over a long duration. Waltz claimed that the absence of balancing between European states is itself a structural effect of the US security guarantee because, 'Balancing among states is not inevitable. As in Europe, a hegemonic power may suppress it.' (Waltz, 1991: 26)

Josef Joffe has restated this perspective arguing that,

'[The US] guarantee is normally seen only as a cornerstone of the global Soviet-American balance, with the United States providing a counterweight to Soviet power that the West Europeans were unable to provide for themselves. Yet by extending its guarantee, the United States removed the prime structural cause of conflict among states - the search for an autonomous defense policy' (Joffe, 1984: 68).

This lack of balancing among European states thus made possible deep cooperation in a wide variety of policy areas. As Waltz argued in *Theory of International Politics*,

'The emergence of Russian and American superpowers created a situation that permitted wider ranging and more effective cooperation among the states of Western

Europe... Not all impediments to cooperation were removed but one important one was - the fear that the greater advantage of one would be translated into military force to be used against the other... Because the security of all of them came to depend ultimately on the policies of others, rather than on their own, unity could effectively be worked for, although not easily achieved.' (1979, 70)

Christopher Layne has underlined the point, arguing that,

'In effect, the American military presence removed both the security dilemma, and the relative gains problem, from the agendas of its Western European allies' (2000: 74).

Robert Powell made a similarly compelling argument, when he suggested that such structural conditions could explain a shift in state behavior from fear of others making relative gains to an embrace of absolute gains,

'If the use of force is no longer at issue, then a state's relative loss will not be turned against that state. Relative gains no longer matter, and cooperation now becomes feasible' (Powell, 1991: 1316).

To accept this explanation is not necessarily to argue that neorealist theory expects that conflict between European NATO states is impossible. It is rather to argue that it is highly unlikely because the main structural cause of war, i.e., the fear of the other under anarchy, is not present. The effect of US dominance on those states under the security guarantee is therefore to 'turn off', or at least 'turn down', the condition of anarchy between themselves. And, while European states may contribute to balancing other powers external to NATO, their contribution is not, according to the Waltzian analysis above, deemed sufficiently significant relative to the might of US protection. The consequences of this theoretical argument appear quite profound, yet few scholars have integrated them explicitly into theoretical accounts of European defence cooperation (Locattelli and Testoni, 2009; Collard-Wexler, 2006:

406) <sup>19</sup>. David Lake has drawn on this situation to make the bold claim that the role of the United States in these circumstances changes the organising principle of the international system to one of hierarchy rather than anarchy (Lake, 2009). This thesis takes a different view, echoing that of Waltz (1970, 107) which is that anarchy has not disappeared from the system under such circumstances. Rather, its effects have been suppressed by the presence of a particular structural-relational context. This leads to a durable alliance, but it remains an alliance or a treaty of guarantee between sovereign states, and thus remains susceptible to dissolution at some unknown point in the future.

Thus, it is argued here that the durability of an asymmetric alliance leads to a much-diluted security dilemma and the greatly reduced fear of others making relative gains, and this means that deep cooperation such as capability mutualisation is possible. Such a conclusion opens up the possibility that, contrary to the general neorealist assumption that anarchy rules out international specialisation in matters of security, it may in fact be possible under certain conditions. *Pace* Howorth and Menon, then, the logic of international politics does not work 'in much the same way' within Europe as beyond it. On the contrary, a very different logic operates among subordinate states within an asymmetric alliance configuration and, when such a theoretical approach is applied, this has important ramifications for explanations of European defence cooperation and capability mutualisation.

### *Unipolarity and alliance behaviour*

Before going any further with the explication of the theoretical approach undertaken in this thesis, it is necessary to consider the extent to which contemporary international politics can be described in terms of system polarity. The foregoing analysis, based on that of Waltz and Snyder, has been confined to consideration of the impact of multipolar and bipolar structures and relationship variables on alliance behaviour, with reference to NATO during the Cold War as an example. The international system, however, can no longer be reasonably described as bipolar.

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<sup>19</sup> Locattelli and Testoni are an exception, as they recognise that asymmetry 'softens intra-allied competition', although their broader approach is quite different from that undertaken here. Collard-Wexler speculates that a reduction in the intensity of anarchy might be a plausible explanation for deeper European cooperation.

And NATO's persistence in the absence of a bipolar confrontation has presented a challenge to neorealist theory, which rests on the notion of balance of power as a fundamental condition of the system (Mearsheimer 1990, Waltz 2000). The question as to whether the contemporary international system is best classified as unipolar or multipolar remains controversial.

Most neorealist scholars argue that the contemporary states system is unipolar because the US has unrivalled military capabilities (Wohlforth 1999; Jervis, 2011). It has been argued, for example, that the fact that the US spends more on defence than the rest of the world combined is evidence in favour of unipolarity (Wohlforth, 2011: 9). In the absence of any clear balance of power, such questions involve large degrees of judgement. Empirical reality is complex, particularly given the possession of nuclear weapons by several states, and in the case of Russia, an arsenal still comparable to that of the US; indeed, some argue that nuclear-armed Russia and China have sufficient military capabilities to be described as poles in the system (Haine, 2015). The theoretical approach developed in this thesis will, however, assume that, from a neorealist perspective, the US has such unparalleled global military reach as to remain the unipolar power in the contemporary states system.

Given this assumption, how might unipolarity impact on the conditions identified above in respect of states in such an asymmetrical alliance? As discussed, Press-Barnathan has argued that the shift to unipolarity had a transformative effect on the nature of the alliance security dilemma for subordinate states within NATO. She has argued that in the absence of any structural pressure for the US to defend Europe, there would logically be a greater fear of abandonment among Europeans.

Simultaneously, however, there would be a greater risk of entrapment as the US became less restrained in the absence of a balancing power (2006). Thus, the shift to unipolarity could be interpreted as increasing the intensity of the alliance security dilemma. Others have made similar claims, arguing that the shift from bipolarity to unipolarity has meant that fear of abandonment is now the main concern of European states (Matlary and Petersson, 2013: 6; Dyson, 2013: 428; Jones, 2007).

And yet this may be to attribute too much importance to the effects of a change in system structure on an alliance whose internal relationship dynamics have in fact

changed little. The balance of power logic of an American defence of Europe is quite clearly lessened under unipolarity, but it does not logically follow that the US would no longer see Europe as a vital interest. Indeed, it has explicitly claimed to do so, at least within the period under examination here (US Department of Defense, 2012)<sup>20</sup>. Abandonment under unipolarity seems only marginally more likely than under bipolarity. Has the risk of entrapment grown any more likely? Because the power relationship remains fundamentally asymmetrical, divergence of most lower level interests may not be of any greater consequence than it was during the Cold War, despite what Waltz called the greater 'capriciousness' of a unipolar power (2000: 29). So long as there is agreement on the negative interests that the dominant and subordinate states see defended in the continuation of the alliance, i.e., the territorial defence of Europe, divergences in other interests can still be managed. Flexibility of strategy may not be as high as it was during the Cold War when Western European states could use relations with the Soviet Union for diplomatic leverage. However, the vast capability asymmetry at the heart of the alliance ensures that there remains significant flexibility, for example, in the way in which European states provide military support for 'Article 5' commitments and to US-led operations 'out of area', and indeed whether they support the latter at all.

Layne has argued persuasively from empirical evidence that the US saw a strategic interest in continuing to provide a security guarantee to European states even after the end of the Cold War,

'In the post-Cold War world, NATO was key to the US objectives of controlling Germany, preventing Russia's resurgence as a great power, and expanding the geographical and ideological scope of American interests in Europe.' (Layne, 2000: 68)

And, for their part, European states themselves still required an alignment with US military power, as much to maintain the suppression of balancing between themselves as to defend against potential future threats such as a revanchist Russia.

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<sup>20</sup> The US Defence Strategic Guidance notes that: 'The United States has enduring interests in supporting peace and prosperity in Europe as well as bolstering the strength and vitality of NATO, which is critical to the security of Europe and beyond'.



Robert Art has explored the considerable concerns that were voiced over the 'renationalisation of defence' among European governments following the end of the Cold War (Art, 1996). Thus, as Waltz argued,

'Accepting the leadership of a hegemonic power prevents a balance of power from emerging in Europe, and better the hegemonic power should be at a distance than next door' (Waltz, 1991: 26).

Thus, the 'problem' of the continuation of NATO is one for neorealist theory in its purely Waltzian structural guise, rather than to a generally plausible empirical explanation. A theoretical explanation for the continuation of NATO and the US security guarantee in the absence of a structural explanation is, however, aided by use of Snyder's relationship variables if it can be shown that the continued alignment of interests is sufficient for the alliance to continue under unipolarity. As Snyder argued, 'Alliances - for example, NATO today - may outlast a structural change that logically calls for their dissolution' (Snyder, 1996: 175). And although he did not, perhaps could not, present it in neorealist terms given the limitations of purely structural analysis, the importance of an alignment of interests also appears to have been Waltz's own conclusion on the matter (Waltz, 2000: 20).

It is reasonable to conclude then, that the nature of the unipolar system structure and the continuation of the NATO alliance based on common, or at least convergent, interests provides sufficient continuity to allow for the same theoretical claims outlined above to remain relevant to the study of contemporary military cooperation in Europe. If the transatlantic alliance is understood as an alignment that exerts its own independent effects, then certain effects may be expected to continue even given a shift in polarity, as long as those shifts in polarity do not fundamentally undermine the logic of the relationship variables operating within the configurations set out above. In other words, the weak alliance security dilemma that is produced by low interdependence and durability is not necessarily a result of bipolarity alone. The asymmetry of the alliance does not necessarily require bipolarity to exert similar effects; asymmetric capabilities and aligned interests may be sufficient. As such, relationship variables can help to explain why state behaviour in the transatlantic

alliance has not changed greatly even following the major structural change of the end of the Cold War.

The paragraphs above demonstrate that the combination of Waltz's structural approach, and Snyder's extension of neorealism to the relationship variables that explain the formation and subsequent internal dynamics of alliances can be combined to provide what is termed in this thesis a structural-relational configuration. Thus, the dominant-subordinate or asymmetric alliance configuration explains certain critical dynamics within a heavily asymmetric alliance in a bipolar or unipolar system structure. It is now necessary then to outline a model of behaviour and outcomes based on how the asymmetric alliance configuration shapes both the strategies of subordinate states and the shape of their military capabilities, and their interactions in the context of local alliance configurations.

#### *The logic of behaviour under an asymmetric alliance configuration*

First, then, taking subordinate state strategies in isolation, the asymmetric alliance configuration can be said to shape the form and intensity of the alliance security dilemma that they face (Snyder, 1984; 1986)<sup>21</sup>. Thus, whereas in a multipolar, broadly symmetrical alliance, allies will fear entrapment and abandonment simultaneously and equally strongly, in the asymmetric alliance configuration, the primary fear is one of entrapment into the policies of the dominant state. While complete abandonment is possible, given the structural-relational factors that sustain the alliance, it is less likely and therefore a secondary concern. As Snyder observed, such an alliance security dilemma is 'weak' in that there is little immediate tension between the entrapment and abandonment risk (1984: 484). Thus, from this asymmetric alliance security dilemma can be derived the strategic ends that subordinate states will tend to pursue. The identification of these strategic ends allows for the classification of concrete interests for which military capability is generated and deployed, and which is therefore instrumental to those strategic ends. The asymmetric alliance configuration set out above thus shapes a means-ends logic of behaviour among subordinate states in relation to their military capabilities,

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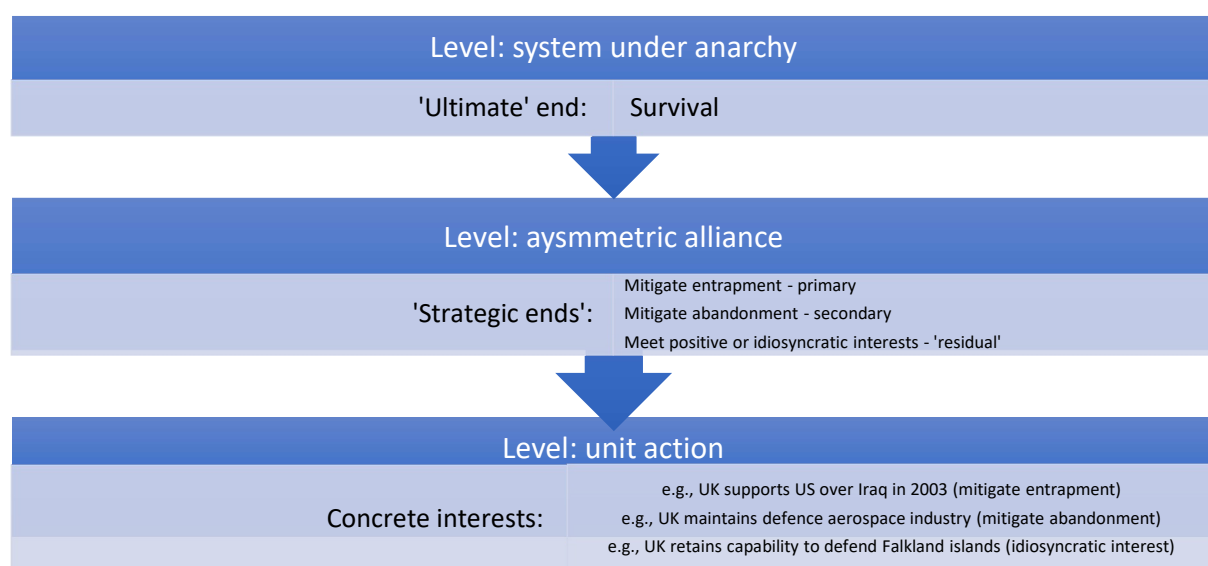
<sup>21</sup> This claim about the alliance security dilemma is indebted to Snyder, but is perhaps novel in its expression as a configurational function of both structural and relational factors.

the systemic logic of which is set out in figure 2.1. The strategic ends of subordinate states can thus be expressed as follows:

*Mitigating entrapment or 'the struggle for influence'*: the most important objective, and for which subordinate state military capability provides the means, is to garner influence with the dominant state to prevent, or at least to mitigate politico-military entrapment. As has been shown, however, this does not determine behaviour on every occasion because subordinate states also have considerable flexibility in how they support the dominant state's positive interests.

*Hedging against abandonment*: subordinate states may have faith in the longevity of the alliance, but they cannot be entirely sure of the extent of its durability. They therefore have an interest in maintaining some military capabilities, and the capacity to generate them autonomously, to hedge against an uncertain future. The extent to which subordinate states can do so will, of course, vary according to the level of their power resources.

*Autonomy for positive or idiosyncratic interests*: subordinate states will seek to retain sufficient operational autonomy for core territorial defence and positive/non-alliance interests; but the extent of such interests will vary among subordinate states.



**Figure 2.1. The shaping of strategic ends and concrete interests**

The analytical purpose behind identifying these strategic ends is to provide a way to frame and explain the means-ends rationale of subordinate state behaviour in relation to the concrete, empirical interests that will arise in the analyses that follow in later chapters of this thesis. The formulation above requires clarification as to the definition of 'concrete interests'. As Hedley Bull noted in relation to the idea of 'the national interest', what is critical is a definition of the *ends* that such interests are assumed to follow rather than the content of any given concrete interest. Thus,

'the criterion of 'national interest' or 'interest of state', in itself provides us with no specific guidance either in interpreting the behaviour of states or in prescribing how they should behave - unless we are told what concrete ends or objectives states do or should pursue: security, prosperity, ideological objectives or whatever' (Bull, 1977: 63).

Contrary to Snyder's approach to interests, which involves their division into instrumental and values-based or 'intrinsic' interests (1996: 176), this thesis will simply assume that concrete interests are derived from and are instrumental towards the strategic ends set out above, which are themselves derived from the ultimate neorealist end of survival<sup>22</sup>. The advantage of such a conceptualisation of ends and interests is that it provides a logic of action for subordinate states in relation to the generation and deployment of their military capabilities, i.e., an answer to the question as to why subordinate states under a heavily asymmetric alliance would feel it necessary to sustain any military capabilities at all. And it is this logic of action that shapes to a considerable extent the degree to which they can mutualise their capabilities with their subordinate peers. It therefore provides a conceptual map as to the likely divergence and convergence of concrete interests within any given local alliance configuration, and which may have implications for the possibility of capability mutualisation.

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<sup>22</sup> This is obviously a simplification of empirical reality for theoretical and analytical purposes. It is possible that some concrete interests may arise from value interests, such as the doctrine of 'Responsibility to Protect' or public opinion outraged over mass human rights abuses. But given that strategic ends are themselves assumed to be instrumental to the neorealist objective of survival, there is at least theoretical consistency in the simplification.

### *The logic of mutualisation: capability mutualisation within a local alliance configuration*

It is now necessary to consider how the asymmetric alliance configuration shapes the more particular local alliance configurations that may arise between states within the alliance, and which will have a crucial effect on the likelihood and form of capability mutualisation. Such divergences and convergences include those idiosyncratic interests identified above, as well as the different scale and function of their military capabilities that may or may not be well-aligned with each other. By drawing together the alliance and local configurations, it is now possible to set out a theoretical model that can encapsulate the necessary variables to explain the occurrence and form of military capability mutualisation.

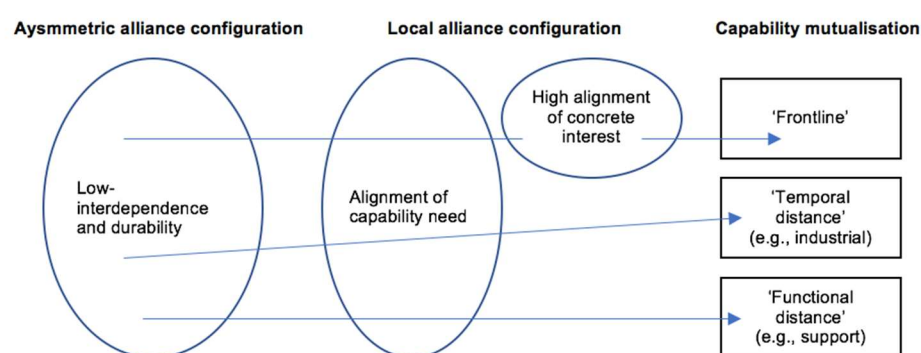
The situational context of the local alliance configuration, which is itself nested within the asymmetric alliance configuration, shapes whether and in what form capability mutualisation will arise between subordinate states, and it does so in four ways. First, the durability of the alliance, derived from the asymmetric alliance configuration, means that there is likely to be sufficient confidence for the long-term mutualisation of those aspects of military capabilities whose development and production takes place at a temporal distance from operational use (for example, aspects of defence industrial design and production). Second, while low interdependence mitigates against mutualisation at the frontline, there may be occasions where the alignment of a concrete interest is sufficiently high to create strong expectations of mutual support (for example, in the policing of territorial airspace). Third, the flexibility of policy inherent in a context of low interdependence and high durability may enable mutualisation of capabilities whose function enables use at a greater spatial distance from the operational frontline (for example, support services to vessels and aircraft) where the political risks are lower.

Finally, some element of symmetry or balanced asymmetry in terms of the function of capability offered up for mutualisation by each partner is vital (Pannier, 2016)<sup>23</sup>.

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<sup>23</sup> This 'symmetrism' has also been noted by Pannier in her study of contemporary Franco-British defence cooperation. For the purposes of this thesis, it is regarded as axiomatic that states will behave in such a way in the pursuit of means-ends strategies, i.e., that tit-for-tat (in either positive or negative senses) defines international cooperation.

For partners to accept capability mutualisation, it is necessary for each side to offer to sustain important elements of that capability through sharing or specialisation, a situation that may be described as ‘win-win’. Without this ‘match-making’ aspect, capability mutualisation is impossible. This final variable thus places important material restrictions and opportunities on mutualisation between states. The different configurations of variables that may lead to the occurrence of different forms of capability mutualisation is expressed in Figure 2.2 below.



**Figure 2.2. Structural-relational configurations and capability mutualisation**

The inherent difficulty of capability mutualisation can be illustrated by sketching a utopian image of ‘perfect capability mutualisation’. If two states had exactly the same capabilities and future requirements and exactly the same concrete interests, all with complete certainty of mutual support at the same temporal points, then mutualisation would not be an issue at all. The variables of concrete interest, temporality and capability function would be in perfect alignment. There would be no entrapment or abandonment risk to worry about, and as such, autonomy would not be an issue either. States would retain their sovereignty-autonomy in the sense of strategic decision-making, but any need for autonomous control over aspects of particular capabilities would be made irrelevant by the identity of interests and capabilities. In absolute terms, such a situation is utopian; states could never be so clearly aligned, not just because of variations in systemic factors but also because of their myriad domestic differences in interests and capabilities. Waltz makes a similar point when he compares this kind of cooperation with oligopolistic markets and the impossibility of collusion across all variables (Waltz, 1979: 105). In more partial terms, however, it

is possible that there may be sufficient alignment of such variables under particular circumstances to allow for mutualisation of military capabilities at different points in the value chain or DLODs of their generation and deployment. It is possible to extract three hypotheses from the model set out above, and these will now be set out in turn below.

i. Capability mutualisation at temporal distance from the frontline

In an anarchic system an eternal alliance cannot be expected, but where there are beneficial structural-relational conditions, a highly durable alliance is possible. This may lead to a relaxation of the intensity of anarchy and thus concerns over the security dilemma and relative gains. The previous section posed the question as to how neorealism could explain those examples of mutualisation, such as defence industrial cooperation, that do not necessarily imply mutual dependence on the frontline of operations. It is argued that the answer lies in the temporal stability provided by the asymmetric alliance configuration. The dilution of the logic of self-help and the relative gains conundrum provides the temporal space for mutualisation aimed at economic efficiency through specialisation and sharing. Beyond a certain timeframe, perhaps measured in a couple of decades, it cannot be known whether the benign conditions for cooperation will prevail. There is, however, sufficient confidence to significantly lower the risk of mutual dependence for military capabilities. There is therefore an alternative to self-help in the generation of military capabilities. The temporal longevity of the alliance together with the asymmetry of power with the dominant state, however, also allows for states to hedge against the risk of being entrapped or abandoned by their partners into divergent interests. Thus, states in this situation remain sovereignty-autonomous decision-makers, but they do not need to rely solely on self-help. This quasi-hierarchical condition means that they can work together to specialise or share in the provision of military capabilities without fear of an alliance security dilemma of entrapment or abandonment arising between them. As such, the following hypothesis can be put forward:

H1: Aspects of capability mutualisation may be found at high temporal distance from the frontline, with or without a high alignment of concrete interests.

## ii. Capability mutualisation at the frontline

The problem of capability mutualisation at the frontline is the most challenging for subordinate states that seek efficiencies through specialisation and sharing. For even where there is a stable, long-term suppression of anarchy between the subordinate states of the alliance, there remains a significant variation in the alignment of concrete interests due to the inherent flexibility in the dominant-subordinate configuration. Low interdependence means that there is an absence of pressure to meet any interest with temporally and functionally aligned deployment of military capability. Strategic ends provide some insight into where alignments of concrete interests and capability requirements may occur, but this insight is limited by the high variation in the interests and capabilities of subordinate states. States have high flexibility over the terms of both their pursuit of the struggle for influence over the dominant state and their own idiosyncratic positive interests. Regarding the struggle for influence, this flexibility means that states may choose the temporal and functional dimensions of their contribution to any concrete interest pursued by the dominant state interest. Because the aggregation of military capability is never vital to the dominant state in the asymmetric alliance it means that there is considerable flexibility for subordinate states over the timing and form of their military contribution particularly to positive interests. Thus, due to the low level of interdependence, the way in which subordinate states determine their own attitude to the concrete interest vis-à-vis that of the dominant state will tend to be an idiosyncratic combination of systemic and unit-level factors depending upon domestic politics and personalities.

The inherent flexibility in the way in which subordinate states can carry out their struggle for influence over the dominant state, and some of their residual idiosyncratic interests, means that temporally immediate, functional alignment of capability is very difficult, and hence restricts mutualisation of capability on the frontline. Even if two subordinate states were to support the dominant state over a positive interest, whether that interest were shared or unshared, they could not necessarily guarantee doing so simultaneously or offer similar capabilities as a contribution<sup>24</sup>. This is despite the fact that there may be a very strong alignment

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<sup>24</sup> While it raises some potentially important issues, the question of command and control of mutualised military capabilities, which is obviously of particular relevance to frontline mutualisation, is not tackled directly in this thesis. It is sufficient to note



between all allies as regards the negative interest of territorial defence, as is the case, for example, for the NATO alliance's 'Article 5' mutual defence clause. And were there only negative interests, frontline mutualisation would be far more likely. The problem, however, is that because military capabilities are rarely earmarked to concrete interests, even a strong alignment of interests cannot be easily translated into frontline capability mutualisation.

There are, however, some exceptions. This is because some concrete interests and the capabilities required to meet them may also be relatively fixed. As will be seen in a forthcoming chapter, for example, territorial air policing may be such an exception. In these circumstances, 'frontline' mutualisation of capabilities is possible. As will be explored below, it is possible that through the mutualisation of support functions, cooperation for efficiency is also possible much closer, in both temporal and spatial terms, to the frontline. But frontline mutualisation will not occur unless there is a very high certainty that there will be a full alignment over a concrete interest. This can be expressed in the following hypothesis:

H2: Capability mutualisation may be found at zero temporal-spatial distance from the frontline where there is a very high certainty of support for concrete interests.

### iii. Capability mutualisation at functional distance from frontline

While it is the case that there is low interdependence between subordinate states vis-à-vis the concrete interests of the dominant state and thus high flexibility, there is *in general* a strong alignment between them because they have the same strategic ends. Subordinate states wish to exert influence over the dominant state to mitigate entrapment. It is this observation that has prompted scholars to explain some EU defence cooperation initiatives as attempts to concert such strategies. The hypothesis above suggests that this is very difficult to do as regards frontline mutualisation. There is, however, a way in which states can draw on their flexibility to pursue such mutualisation across functions that are removed from the frontline and

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that neither command nor control need be under exclusively national control. All NATO states put their forces to some degree under NATO command, and states may create bilateral arrangements to put their forces under the direct command of an official of another state, such as the French and British in the later stages of World War I, potentially in the new Combined Joint Expeditionary Force (see Chapter 4), and in the BENELUX arrangements for joint air-policing (see Chapter 5).

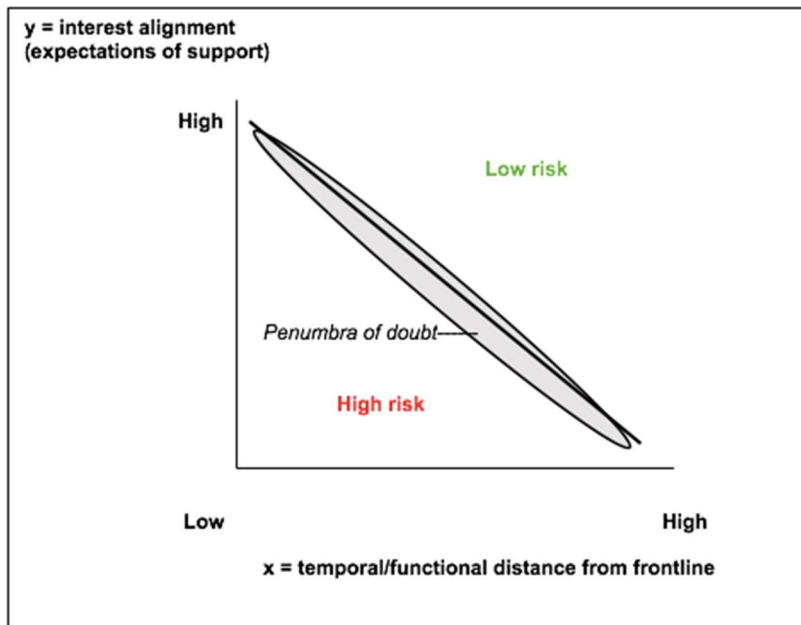
thus carry less risk of entrapment and abandonment. Maintenance and support functions, for example, particularly for the air and maritime components of forces are likely to be at far less risk than frontline forces. Some functions may be literally in 'stand-off' positions such as reconnaissance aircraft or satellites, and fixed infrastructure for training may be based within subordinate state territories. Such possibilities can be encapsulated in the following hypothesis:

H3: Capability mutualisation may be found at functional distance from the frontline, with or without high certainty of support for concrete interests.

### *Capability mutualisation and risk*

The previous paragraphs demonstrate that possibilities for the mutualisation of military capabilities are both enabled and constrained by the situational context provided by the alliance wide and local alliance configurations. The discussion above suggests that aspects of capability mutualisation are quite possible at high temporal and functional distance from the frontline and less likely, though not impossible, at low temporal and functional distance, i.e., when there is a high expectation that some concrete interest will be shared, both temporally and functionally.

The logic of the model can be represented in figure 2.3. On the y axis there is the variable of concrete interests with the value of low to high alignment (defined as expectation of support) over any a concrete interest, whether negative or positive. On the x axis there is the variable of distance from the frontline with the value of low to high temporal and functional distance. Thus, the higher the expectations of support over a given interest, the lower the distance a mutually dependent capability can be from immediate frontline use. And the lower the alignment over a given interest, the further the distance from frontline use of the capability, both in temporal and functional terms.



**Figure 2.3. Relationship between frontline distance and interest alignment**

It can also be postulated that cases that can be found at the two extreme points of the curve involve relatively little risk for the partner states. If, however, cases fall between the two points there may be an element of risk of entrapment or abandonment by the partner. This is expressed in the penumbra of doubt in Figure 2.3. There is an element of risk management in such cooperation. It would not be expected, however, that states would embark on frontline mutualisation where there is a low expectation of shared interests. This leads to a more general expectation for the thesis, which is that there may be higher or lower risk 'intermediate' possibilities within a penumbra of doubt.

#### *General and particular explanations of capability mutualisation*

Other than in setting out the systemic conditions under which it is possible, the model set out above cannot explain *why* any concrete, empirical example of capability mutualisation has occurred. For such explanations, it would be necessary to look to several other variables, particularly at the unit or domestic level. For the same reason, neither can the theory be expected to explain *when* such mutualisation will occur, other than in the general sense that it may occur when systemic conditions are favourable. The theory does, however, provide a more general

answer to the when and why questions, and this relates to efficiency as the fundamental motivation for capability mutualisation, achieved by reducing costs or sustaining the ability to generate capability through specialisation and sharing. Exactly when and why a state may need to find a more efficient way of sustaining its military capabilities is a matter for empirical investigation. We can, however, posit the general expectation that states will seek greater efficiency when it is possible due to favourable systemic configurations. It is also reasonable to assume, however, that mutualisation is more likely to be pursued when pressure is greater, i.e., when states have particular difficulty in resourcing those strategic ends identified above. This provides the theoretical underpinning for the section in each of the following case studies that considers the 'logic of crisis' in the resourcing of the strategic ends of European states, as set out above.

The utility of the model outlined above then, is that it explains how it is possible for states to mutualise capability for efficiency and the likely form this will take, depending on the shape of structural-relational configurations. The logic of the theory also furnishes the broader assumption that states will generally seek efficiency wherever this is possible, and more particularly when the means to meet their strategic ends are pressure. Thus, the theory and the model abstracted from it sets out broad conditions for the 'why' and 'when' questions, and a set of more fine-grained hypotheses as to the shape of the 'how'.

The theoretical challenge established at the outset of this chapter was that of the apparent neorealist proscription against capability mutualisation for efficiency in the face of empirical evidence to the contrary. It has been argued that by broadening the scope of neorealism by adding relational variables to Waltz's structural approach to identify 'structural-relational' systemic configurations, it is possible to explain mutualisation through specialisation and sharing from a broadly neorealist perspective. The suppression of the security dilemma and relative gains concerns and the durability of the asymmetric alliance configuration means that mutualisation is possible at temporal distance from the frontline. Secondly, it is possible that the high bar for operational or 'frontline' mutualisation can be met, or that it can be approached very closely, when there is a high certainty that concrete interests will be aligned. Finally, the flexibility inherent in the asymmetric alliance configuration

means that capability mutualisation can also take place at a spatial or functional distance from the frontline. These theoretical expectations thus provide three hypotheses as to the conditions under which military capability mutualisation will be found, and these will inform the following case study chapters.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

This thesis sets out to develop a neorealist theory of military capability mutualisation and test it against concrete cases in contemporary Europe. It is now necessary to set out the methodology by which the theory outlined in the previous chapter is to be deployed against empirical evidence. The meaning of methodology in this context has two dimensions. The first is that a chosen methodology ought to reflect the 'philosophical assumptions' or core ontological and epistemological positions of the theory to be deployed. Secondly, and following on from these assumptions, it refers to the articulation of the concrete methods of gathering and assessing empirical evidence particular to the thesis (Jackson, 2011: 69).

The first section of this chapter will therefore set out and respond to various scholarly controversies as to the meta-theoretical underpinnings of neorealism and the methodologies most appropriate to its application. It will argue that via a careful reading of Waltz's own writings and his intellectual milieu, it is possible to put together a methodological approach that is based on a plausible interpretation of his philosophical assumptions. The section will emphasise how important it is to understand the role of causation and comparison in neorealist theory in order to underpin the choice and use of research methods. The second section of the chapter will then set out a 'mixed methods' approach that draws on both quantitative and qualitative research, and various empirical sources. It will consider issues such as the number of case studies to be examined and the nature and role of evidence from thirty elite-level interviews carried out for the thesis. Finally, it will explain how a series of three analytical narratives will provide a framework for each case study.

#### **i. Neorealism and methodology**

##### *Neorealism – contested foundations*

For many theory-driven research projects, the understanding of methodology in terms of its core philosophical assumptions is not regarded as a key issue because

the link between a theoretical approach and its methodology is deemed relatively uncontroversial. Yet identifying an appropriate methodology for use in conjunction with neorealist theory is not such a straightforward task. Indeed, there is considerable disagreement among scholars as to Waltz's ontological and epistemological assumptions, and therefore, the appropriate methodology by which neorealist research can be undertaken. His approach has been described variously as 'positivist' (Joseph, 2010; Humphreys, 2012), as having similarities to 'critical realism' (Waever, 2009), as 'constructivist' (Onuf, 2009), 'structural-functionalist' (Goddard and Nexon, 2005), 'ideal-typical' (Jackson, 2011) and 'pragmatic' (Buzan-Jones, 1993). This diverse interpretation of Waltz reflects, as Adam Humphreys has argued, the ambiguity of his work on fundamental ontological and epistemological matters (Humphreys, 2013: 2012). There is not sufficient space here to set out and fully justify a novel ontological and epistemological reading of Waltz. It is important, however, to make clear the positions that this thesis takes on these matters, because it is on these foundations that the methodological approach is justified. Thus, there are four related areas on which to take a position and help to explicate the more concrete aspects of the methodology to be deployed. They are as follows: the ontological status of structure in neorealism, Waltz's distinction between systemic and analytic theories, the conception of causation in neorealism and finally the place of comparison in neorealist analysis.

First, regarding ontology, there is considerable debate as to the ontological status of system structure in neorealist theory. As Colin Wight asks, how can Waltz's apparently highly abstract conception of structure have independent effects on 'real' states to the extent that it can 'shape and shove' their actions (Wight, 2006: 97)? Ole Waever has conjectured that Waltz may have conceived of structure in a similar way to adherents of critical realism, wherein social structures are ascribed 'real' tendencies and emergent properties that exert independent effects (Waever, 2009: 204). Jonathon Joseph, however, has dismissed this notion, arguing that Waltz took an 'empirical realist' position in which structure was purely 'instrumental' and theory based on an 'as if' reading of reality,

'Structure exists in the theoretical model, not in the real world... There is nothing out there that Waltz's theory of structure can be said to refer to.' (2010: 487).

Thus, for Joseph, neorealism cannot call on the 'real powers' of emergent properties and tendencies in the way that critical realists may, because Waltz's approach does not allow for such 'real' causal entities (487). Yet, this does not capture the position implied by Waltz at various points in his *Theory of International Politics* (1979); indeed, he argued that,

'Something works as a constraint on the agents or is interposed between them and the outcomes their actions contribute to. In international politics systems-level forces seem to be at work' (1979: 39).

Waltz does not use the language of 'emergent properties' as critical realists do, and instead writes of 'forces' and 'unobservables', but it is plausible that he regarded 'systems-level forces' as equivalent to the concept of emergence in systems theory. And thus, *contra* Joseph, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that Waltz did believe that there was 'something out there' in the form of independent forces that 'seem to be at work' in international politics. But how does Waltz translate empirical observation of real forces into his theory? As will be argued below, an answer is to be found in his view of neorealism as a systems theory and in an interpretation of Waltz's view of causation drawn from acknowledged influences and his wider intellectual milieu.

The second crucial aspect of neorealism is that it is a system theory. In *Theory of International Politics*, Waltz makes a crucial distinction between system theories and 'analytic' theories. For Waltz, the analytic method is,

'preeminently the method of classical physics and because of its immense success often thought of as *the* method of science, [it] requires reducing the entity to its discrete parts and examining their properties and connections... By controlled experiments the relation between each pair of variables is separately examined' (1979: 39).

For Waltz, the 'analytic' approach or what John Stuart Mill called the 'chemical or experimental method of social science' (Mill, 2009: 1066), and Patrick Jackson describes as the 'neopositivist' case comparison method (Jackson, 2011: 70) is not



appropriate for the study of international politics. This is because in such a realm, 'the structure of the system and its interacting units mutually affect each other' (1979: 58; Goddard and Nexon, 2005: 10). This claim is also the source of Waltz's central contention in *Man, the State and War*, i.e., that the international system as a 'framework for action' must also be regarded as causally important to outcomes in international politics, not merely individuals and the states to which they belong (1959: 231). This leads to the third issue, that of the neorealist view of causation. Here, Waltz posits that in a systems approach, causation is always running in two directions, from the units to the system and vice-versa. Thus, any actual historical outcome in international politics will always be explained as caused by both, perhaps one more than the other, but always by both. As a system-level cause, structure shapes and shoves (it does not determine), and the two types of causation must be disentangled through theoretically-informed analysis.

This view of causation within a system leads the discussion back to the ontological status of structure, a matter that Waltz, sadly, did not deal with explicitly in his texts. A plausible explanation for the ontological status of structure can, however, be found within sociological thought and particularly the 'structural functionalism' that was prevalent during the early part of Waltz's career (Goddard and Nexon, 2005: 11). For structural functionalism, causation is an inherently social concept. In social circumstances, behaviour or outcomes can be explained by the notion of 'adequate causation', i.e., the context for action provides for a set of norms against which it can be assumed that an individual (or state) will behave in a fairly consistent way (Weber, 1949: 80; Goddard and Nexon, 2005: 20). Thus, regularities of behaviour and outcomes can be expected in certain delimited contexts. But this does not imply causal necessity; for other reasons beyond the purview of the theory, behaviour and outcomes may not always comply with expectations. Such a theory includes the possibilities that social systems have emergent properties, such as structure, that exert independent effects. This notion is perhaps best put by Talcott Parsons, the influential structural functionalist sociologist, writing on Emile Durkheim, himself an important influence on Waltz (1979: 243),

'The decisive step was the distinction of *social* constraint from naturalistic causation. The social milieu constitutes a set of conditions beyond the control of a given

concrete individual, but not beyond the control of human agency in general. In fact, from this point of view its most conspicuous aspect turns out to be a system of normative rules backed by sanctions.’ (Parsons, 1968: 709)

It can be argued then that Waltz is drawing on an inherently sociological view of causation within his systems approach, a view of causation distinct from what Parsons above describes as ‘naturalistic causation’ or what Joseph calls ‘Humean’ causation (Joseph, 2010: 487). This requires that Waltz’s system-level forces are socially generated, or in the language of Parsons, based on ‘normative rules backed by sanctions’. As Waltz argues, the predominant tendency to self-help behavior under neorealism, which can be conceived of as a normative rule, emerges from sanction and is advanced by emulation and competition (1979: 74). Thus, the system shapes behavior, and the structure of the system emerges from the behavior of states and in turn influences their behavior. For Parsons, such emergent properties are ‘real’ enough. And, while theory can never fully represent reality or causation of actual events in all its multi-faceted complexity, it can provide a simplified lens through the isolation of certain ‘frames of reference’, and thus the analytical components of such a theory may ‘have sufficient grasp’ of elements of reality (1968: 730). While it is impossible to establish whether Waltz entertained such an ontological approach to neorealism, it is perhaps a more consistent and plausible analysis than those offered by scholars elsewhere.

The final issue is that of the role of comparison in neorealist methodology. For Parsons, as apparently for Waltz, comparison was crucial. Only through comparison could the independent effects of a variable be established. And indeed, this appears to be the approach that Waltz takes in his *Theory of International Politics*. Thus, in the latter chapters of that work, Waltz tests for the independent variation of structure as an emergent property of the system, and he does so directly against empirical reality. He does this by arguing that variation in structure affects the level of stability in a system, and that different system structures affect the level of interdependence between allied states, hence the substantial differences in behavior and outcomes that can be observed consistently across European states, depending on whether they are allies in a multipolar or bipolar system (1979: 161).

Yet some scholars have objected to this apparently 'positivist' reading of Waltz's methodology (Jackson, 2011: 149; Humphreys; 2012: 391). Jackson, for example argues that Waltz seems to advocate something more like that of Max Weber's 'ideal type' approach, wherein a 'theory' is used as a framework for analysis of singular historical case studies; thus, no claims are made for the realism of the theory, and thus comparison is pointless because there is no 'real' independent variable to establish (Jackson, 2011: 142). The aim rather is to compare singular historical events to the 'utopian' ideal type to aid understanding. The confusion as to Waltz's methodology relates, perhaps, to the dual purpose of Waltz's theory, indeed of any theory conceived in such a way. In his *The Structure of Social Action*, Parsons points to Weber's identification of a 'bifurcation of scientific interest' among researchers,

'in the one direction toward the understanding of concrete individual phenomena as such, in the other to the building of theoretical systems of general validity' (1968: 758).

On this reading, the use of a theory such as neorealism can be interpreted in two ways. On the one hand, as a framework for analysis of concrete historical events where 'testing' is not required, but for which the theory provides a portion of the whole explanation and other factors of explanation are also brought in, either *ad hoc* or via another theoretical approach. Here, the theory is not tested but rather used more instrumentally to aid a general explanation of an historical event. On the other hand, neorealist theory offers a general insight into international politics, the validity of which can be tested through comparison to isolate the independent effects of structure, or in the case of this thesis, structural-relational variables.

The preceding paragraphs have sought to make clear the position of this thesis relating to some foundational issues of neorealist theory that have clear implications for its methodological approach. It has been argued that system attributes such as structure, conceived of as emergent properties or forces, are 'real' and can be investigated as such, although their theoretical representation will necessarily be abstracted and simplified. And it has been argued that under neorealism the purpose of testing a theory is to establish that structure exerts independent effects, and that

this can be achieved through case comparison. The following paragraphs will now consider in more detail how in practice such testing may be undertaken.

### *Structural-relational configurations and independent effects*

It has been argued that on the one hand, there is theory as the development of generalisations about behavior and outcomes, and on the other, as a kind of ideal type framework on which to hang a fuller explanation of a particular historical event or events by bringing in other explanatory factors otherwise excluded from the theory. In attempting to create a general theoretical explanation for military capability mutualisation, this thesis will follow the former conception of theory construction and validation. It is not claimed that the theory is able or aims to completely explain military capability mutualisation in all its complexity as a phenomenon or in relation to its empirical occurrence in contemporary Europe. It claims only to offer a theoretical explanation from the system level, or what might be called the perspective of international politics. This, of course, may offer a considerable part of the explanation, but it cannot offer every dimension of it, particularly as a causal account of an inevitably idiosyncratic historical outcome.

While the fundamentals of the neorealist theory outlined in the preceding chapter are not new, the approach developed in this thesis does involve theoretical innovation aimed at the explanation of a more particular empirical phenomenon, i.e., the mutualisation of military capabilities under certain structural-relational configurations. Since this is the first iteration of the theory, therefore, it is necessary to test it against empirical reality and to attempt to evaluate its plausibility and claims to validity. The aim is thus to provide guarded generalisations as to why mutualisation of military capability occurs at all, and why the form and frequency of its occurrences regularly tend, to borrow Waltz's phrase, to 'fall within specified ranges' (1979: 68). How then does one isolate and demonstrate the independent effects of systemic variables? It has been argued that comparison to isolate independent effects is essential, but how does this work in a systemic theory? For Waltz, there was no single methodological tool for testing the validity of his theory. He argued that,

'We should test a theory in all of the ways we can think of - by trying to falsify and to confirm it, by seeing whether things work in the way the theory suggests, and by comparing events in arenas of similar structure to see if they follow similar patterns' (1997: 916).

While Waltz did not rule out falsification, he was sceptical of depending entirely on the approach, and he argued that 'confirmation' remained a legitimate means by which to test the validity of a theory (1979: 123). Confirmation is, he argued, particularly pertinent to the demonstration of systemic effects. A systemic theory might thus be tested by demonstrating how different units under the same structure exhibit similar patterns of behaviour and how similar outcomes occur within similar structural conditions. This is done by building a model from theoretical assumptions and from which expectations can then be extracted and verified against empirical actuality. Thus, in his *Theory of International Politics*, Waltz compared the behavior of states and outcomes under the two different system structures of multipolarity and bipolarity. He argued that certain differences in state behavior and outcomes could be explained by the different system structures, thus making a claim for the independent effects of structure. Observed patterns of behavior and outcomes provide evidence of the effects of structure as a constraining force in some directions and an enabling force in others. Thus, 'The theory explains why a certain similarity of behavior is expected from similarly situated states.' (1979: 122) It is this aspect of patterns and regularity of behavior and outcomes in a system that 'opens the possibility of devising tests that confirm.' This is because,

'If a theory depicts a domain, and displays its organization and the connections among its parts, then we can compare features of the observed domain with the picture the theory has limned. We can ask whether expected behaviors and outcomes are repeatedly found where the conditions contemplated by the theory obtain.' (1979: 123)

Thus, a hypothesis or model drawn from neorealist theory can provide expectations of behaviour and outcomes that will 'fall within specified ranges' (1979: 68), and subsequent testing may confirm or disconfirm expectations. In drawing on configurations of variables at the system level rather than Waltzian structure alone,

the methodological approach envisioned here also resembles that of the 'configurative comparative politics', described by Ira Katznelson as,

'theory characterised by a cluster of ontological and methodological commitments; most prominently the claim that action and identity must firmly be placed inside structural macrofoundations that are not constantly in flux.' (1997: 102)

For Katznelson, 'configurative comparatists' place their focus 'on how structures constitute and cause identities and actions by tilting and organising probabilities' (1997: 102). Confirmation of such a configurative theory, then, is attempted through comparison of different states under similar structural-relational configurations to assess the extent to which behaviours and outcomes fall within expected ranges (Waltz, 1979: 72).

The theoretical approach to explaining the mutualisation of military capability outlined in the previous chapter is a good deal less parsimonious than Waltz's neorealism. It moves beyond system structure as a sole 'independent variable' for explaining regularities of outcomes in international politics. And, drawing on Snyder's work, it brings in other 'relationship' variables through which the structure of a system is connected to unit behavior and outcomes. These variables are framed around the concepts of alignment, interdependence, interests and capabilities. Of these variables, both interests and capabilities may be said to arise from the 'unit level', but because they can be conceived in terms of how they constitute relationships between states, it is argued that the frame of reference for their evaluation remains that of the system or of international politics.

In the theoretical approach set out in the previous chapter, the structural-relational configuration of the asymmetric alliance is assumed to operate like structure in Waltzian neorealism, acting as a relatively constant context for action that constrains some outcomes and enables others. The situational context provided by this asymmetric alliance configuration explains the tendency of states towards a particular logic of action, i.e., the pursuit of certain strategic ends shaped principally by a relationship of high capability asymmetry within an alliance of a dominant and subordinate states. By contrast, the local alliance configuration, which narrows the

focus specifically onto capability mutualisation between subordinate states within the alliance, is made up of interests and capabilities that are likely to vary considerably across the states within the alliance, even while the effects of the asymmetric alliance configuration remain relatively constant.

Differences in local alliance configurations thus explain variation in the frequency and form of capability mutualisation across the case study states. The validity of the model is tested by showing that given the existence of a particular structural-relational configuration, outcomes of capability mutualisation will fall reliably within the expectations of the model, including the absence of mutualisation where the conditions do not apply. This justification for the validity of a claim for independent effects is, however, little different from that of Waltz's approach. The assumption is that despite their many differences, individual states will behave similarly and outcomes will fall within expected certain ranges, according to the logic of their place in the system and the similar structural-relational configurations that affect them.

Yet because structure, or in this case a structural-relational configuration, does not *determine* outcomes, some consideration must be given to the role of other variables external to the theory, particularly domestic factors. This requirement to consider the degree to which other factors are responsible for the outcome means that to a certain extent even when testing a theory of this kind, the use of theory as a framework for historical analysis is necessary. Here, however, the primary aim is not to offer a full explanation of the phenomenon as a historical outcome, but rather to isolate structural-relational variables as an independent effect. Any explanation of empirical actuality must therefore acknowledge the interplay between the systemic and the unit-level. As Waltz argued,

'If structure influences without determining, then one must ask how and to what extent the structure of a realm accounts for outcomes and how and to what extent the units account for outcomes' (1979: 78).

Thus, the search for the *extent* to which system-level variables can be regarded as having exerted independent effects on behaviour and outcomes, and the way that they interact with domestic variables, requires the analysis of at least some unit level

factors. This is perhaps the most challenging methodological implication of the two-way causal dynamics of a system theory. As Waltz noted,

‘The difficulty of sorting out causes is a serious, and seemingly inescapable, limitation of systems theories of international politics’ (1986: 343).

Understanding neorealist methodology in this way also explains why attempts at neopositivist falsification are ‘largely misguided’ when using neorealist theory (Goddard and Nexon, 2005: 28). This is due to the nature of causation in a systemic or societal analysis with emergent properties; if the conception of causation is one of ‘adequacy’ or ‘objective possibility’ based on norms of behaviour and societal constraint, as opposed to one based on causation in the Humean sense as simply necessary, then falsification is a test that such a theory is unlikely to meet. Only in the general sense that the theory might not meet its expectations at all when confronted with empirical actuality, can the word falsification be used.

And understanding neorealist theory as the isolation of a realm, i.e., international politics, with its own internal logic of behaviour and outcomes explained by systemic effects, has further implications for methodology. The approach outlined above does not necessarily challenge different theoretical approaches that emphasise different aspects of empirical actuality. As noted in Chapter One, strategic culture, domestic interest groups and so on may all play a role in a rounded causal account of any concrete, historical capability mutualisation initiative. If, however, theory is regarded as an attempt to generalise, and if not predict then at least set out a range of expected behaviours and outcomes, it must have a reasonable degree of parsimony. Theory cannot answer every aspect of every question in full; nor does a theoretically-informed account necessarily need to exclude the importance of factors that are outside of its purview (1996: 56). A neorealist-informed analysis does not need to always conclude that the factors within its purview, i.e., system-structural forces, were decisive; other ‘residual’ variables may better account for a particular outcome. Thus, the validity of a theory rests not on a total explanation of any concrete outcome, but on the extent to which it can account for regularities or patterns and variations in outcomes. Other theories or approaches may also help explain the phenomenon or aspects of it, but they will do this within their own more-or-less



parsimonious approach. As such, neorealist theory does not require the comparison of a set of 'rival' theories of international relations to ascertain which offers the 'most convincing' explanation for the phenomenon in question; neither, for the same reason, will this thesis pursue a theoretical synthesis to attempt to get the best of all worlds.

In summary, the challenge identified above is to seek out similar outcomes and behaviour in similarly situated states, but which occur regardless of their internal differences. The difficulty of such an approach is unpicking the unit level from the systemic, particularly when the theory itself has almost nothing to say about the relative importance of unit level variables. The extension of neorealist theory to Snyder's process variables assists greatly, but there remain other important factors at the unit level, the 'politics, personalities and preferences' as Snyder puts it, along with issues of culture and identity. One approach to this conundrum would be to adopt a 'neoclassical realist' approach and attempt to integrate unit-level variables more formally into the theory. As argued, however, the danger with such an approach is that the theory then becomes unwieldy and incoherent. And neither is it theoretically necessary or helpful to do so when the aim of the research is solely to isolate and demonstrate systemic effects.

This thesis will instead consider such unit level factors on an *ad hoc* basis, as and when they are encountered and in terms of the extent to which they may cast doubt on the strength of structural-relational effects. This will be particularly important for the first section of each case study, as this will set out to establish the degree to which European states act in accordance with the logic of subordinate state behaviour within an asymmetric alliance, i.e., the extent to which they generate and deploy military capabilities to mitigate entrapment by the dominant state. On this point, European states have very different histories; consider, for example, the role of the armed forces in British post-war foreign policy compared with that of Germany. In the case of both states, it might be argued that their behaviour is strongly influenced by very different political and military cultures. The goal of the argument to be deployed here, however, will be to demonstrate that even if these considerable differences are acknowledged, the role of structural-relational factors in shaping and shoving their behaviour will still be evident. And, as will be seen in the final chapter

sections on actual cases of capability mutualisation, it will be argued that they are constrained and enabled in large part by this logic of behaviour derived from systemic factors.

## ii. Selecting and interpreting empirical data

### *Outcomes and behaviour – what is the ‘dependent variable’?*

It has been argued from basic ontological and epistemological premises that the aim of the methodological approach of this thesis is to establish the independent effects of structural-relational configurations on international outcomes, in this case the phenomenon of military capability mutualisation. This allows and requires a comparative approach, but one that entails a search for similarities in behavior and outcomes among states that are internally different but interact under similar systemic conditions. What kind of evidence is it necessary to gather for such an approach, and where is it located? A preliminary issue is that there is some controversy over what constitutes the dependent variable of neorealist theory (Jervis, 1997: 93). Waltz himself referred to both outcomes and behaviour. He writes of ‘outcomes’ throughout *Theory of International Politics*, but also noted, for example, that, ‘[A neorealist] explanation of states’ behaviour is found at the international, and not at the national, level’ (1996: 54). Snyder cited both, together with a third variable of ‘interactions’ in the form of treaties, diplomatic talks and so forth (1996: 187). Despite the different terms, however, all these variables share the quality that they can be ‘shaped and shoved’, by systemic factors. While it will be argued that the mutualisation of military capability is an *outcome* of international politics, the effect of structural-relational variables on individual state *behavior* is at the core of any neorealist explanation. Behaviour is expected, to some lesser or greater degree, to conform regularly to the shaping and shoving of system variables.

It could be argued that given that the dependent variable in this thesis is military capability mutualisation conceived as an outcome, the only data necessary is evidence of the existence of the expected form of capability mutualisation where the conditions envisaged by the theory obtain. Such confirmatory data would be

consistent with the neorealist methodology set out above. But such an approach would be unsatisfying for two reasons. First, as noted in chapter one of this thesis, there are very few cases of capability mutualisation that comply with the definition set out by this thesis. Although a large number of cases are not, strictly speaking, required to claim independent effects under the theoretical approach outlined above, it would perhaps lend more plausibility to an explanation if there were more cases spread across the three main hypotheses. Secondly, as noted above, causation in neorealism is two-way, between states and systems. To make the case that structural-relational variables are at work requires consideration not only of outcomes, evidence for which can be found in international agreements and subsequent cooperation, but also of official documents and statements outlining the motivations for mutualisation, and ideally, insight into the behaviour of those directly involved in decision-making. These two issues, one of case selection and number of cases and the other the role of the analysis of state behaviour, will now be dealt with below.

### *Case selection*

In order to answer the research questions set out in chapter one, the cases selected for this thesis need to meet three basic criteria, first in providing examples of capability mutualisation that meet the definition set out above, secondly, as occurring between European states, and finally, taking place between the mid-2000s and until 2013, thus encompassing the 2008 financial crisis and its aftermath. This requires a survey of potential cases of capability mutualisation across Europe. As already noted in Table 1.1 in Chapter One, however, there are relatively few cases that meet these criteria. Of the first criteria, which is identification of cases of capability mutualisation, the universe of principal cases is illustrated in Table 3.1. Although it is not claimed to be a fully exhaustive list, the table identifies over twenty major cases of capability mutualisation.

<b>Capability mutualisation case</b>	<b>Period</b>	<b>Form of mutualisation</b>	<b>Frontline distance</b>
Tornado fast jet	1960s - present	Industrial specialisation	Temporal
Franco-British 'Martel' missile	1960s - 1980s	Industrial specialisation	Temporal
Franco-British helicopter cooperation Lynx, Puma, Gazelle	1960s - present	Industrial specialisation	Temporal
Franco-British Jaguar fast jet	1960s - 2000s	Industrial specialisation	Temporal
NATO AWACS	1970s - present	Operational sharing	Functional
Tripartite minehunter (France, Belgium, Netherlands)	1970s - present	Industrial specialisation	Temporal
Multinational Typhoon fast jet	1980s - present	Industrial specialisation	Temporal
Multinational A400M transport aircraft	1980s - present	Industrial specialisation	Temporal
Dutch-Belgian naval command	1990s - present	Operational sharing	Functional
'Horizon' frigate	1980s - present	Industrial specialisation	Temporal
Germany-Netherlands I Corps HQ	1990s - present	Operational sharing	Zero frontline distance
'European Participating Air Forces – Expeditionary Wing'	2004 - present	Operational pooling/sharing	Functional
Strategic Airlift Capability	2006 - present	Operational sharing	Functional
'Matlog' – Dutch-Belgian naval cooperation	2006 - present	Operational specialisation	Functional
Complex weapons 'Centres of Excellence'	2010 - present	Industrial specialisation	Temporal
Airspace surveillance NORDEFCO	2011 – under development	Operational sharing	Functional
Franco-British Future Combat Air System (FCAS)	2010 – under development	To be decided	Temporal
Franco-British A400M support cooperation	2010 – under development		
Franco-British nuclear weapons testing	2010 - present	Infrastructure specialisation	Temporal
Dutch-Belgian Air Policing	2012 - present	Operational sharing	Zero frontline distance
Dutch-Belgian naval procurement cooperation	2012 - present	Industrial specialisation	Temporal

Visegrad Air Policing Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia	2014 – under discussion	Operational sharing	Zero frontline distance
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**Table 3.1. Capability mutualisation – universe of principal cases<sup>25</sup>**

As the data in the table suggests, and as expected given the increasing financial pressures on the sustainment of military capabilities in Europe, there is a noticeable development over time from mostly temporal mutualisation initiatives, largely industrial collaboration, towards an increase in cases of ‘functional’ and ‘zero frontline distance’ forms of cooperation. Again, however, the small number of cases make it hard to draw firm conclusions from this pattern, though there does appear to be a discernible trend. Secondly, and relatedly, in terms of geographic focus, while defence cooperation need not necessarily be limited to Europe, the depth and breadth of military capability mutualisation in this region is unique. And, furthermore, within the subset of cases chosen for this thesis, i.e., Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands and the UK, it is in Western Europe that the most advanced mutualisation initiatives are to be found. The rationale for choosing these states is thus that within the period under investigation the bilateral initiatives between these states provide cases of mutualisation of particular frequency and depth; the selected cases are shown in Table 3.2 below. The other options, NORDEFCO and Visegrad may in future provide worthwhile case studies, but at the time of beginning the research, these cases lacked the kind of ground-breaking mutualisation initiatives that can be found among the states listed above; and there are also issues of research time and resource restraints.

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<sup>25</sup> This is not an exhaustive list, there are many minor ‘smart defence’ and pooling and sharing initiatives, but this table sets out the major mutualisation initiatives. It also excludes major pooling initiatives such as EATC and the EDA/NATO-led air-to-air refuelling cooperation initiative on the basis they are not examples of mutualisation.

Framework case study	Time-period	Military capability initiatives	Distance from frontline
France and the UK: <i>Lancaster House Treaties</i>	2008 - 2010	Future Combat Air System Nuclear weapons testing Complex weapons (missiles) <i>Combined Joint Expeditionary Force (CJEF)</i> <i>Ad hoc operational interdependence</i>	High temporal High temporal Low temporal <i>Zero</i>  <i>Zero</i>
Belgium and the Netherlands: <i>BENELUX Declaration</i>	2005 - 2012	MCM/Frigate replacement Joint air policing 'MATLOG' naval cooperation	High temporal Zero Functional
Germany and the Netherlands <i>Declaration of Intent</i>	2008 - 2013	German-Netherlands I Corps Rapid Reaction Division integration Armoured Division integration	Zero Zero  Zero

**Table 3.2 selected case studies<sup>26</sup>**

The cases have not been chosen according to their relative size or geographical location within Europe; neither are these factors specifically addressed by the research questions. That said, by chance there is a broad variation across the case study states of cooperation between large and large (France-UK), small and small (Belgium-Netherlands), and large and small states (Germany-Netherlands). And, as will be seen, although it is not central to the study, it may be possible to draw some conclusions as to the impact on these cooperative initiatives made by a state's size and the symmetry and asymmetry between partners. There do appear to be some issues around relative scale of forces and the likely compatibility of capability needs. Internal differences between states are, however, more important from a methodological perspective. Despite their socio-economic similarities, European states do exhibit important political and cultural differences in relation to military capabilities, particularly as regards the use of force. As will be seen, there are significant differences between Belgium and Germany, for example, with their strong pacifist strands of opinion, and the UK and France with post-war histories of regular, high scale, high-intensity war-fighting in foreign interventions.

<sup>26</sup> Those initiatives in italics are not clear cases of mutualisation according to the definition set out here, but are included in chapter four as case studies to highlight wider aspects of mutual dependence and the application of the theory.

Finally, in terms of the historical temporality of the cases, the rationale for choosing contemporaneous cases, in the dual sense that they are currently ongoing and have their origins in broadly the same temporal period, is twofold. First, it allows for systemic and historical conditions to be held more or less constant. All the initiatives can be considered to have occurred with the same structural backdrop, i.e., with a 'unipolar' US, and with major allied operations of importance to the European case study states, notably Iraq and Afghanistan, ongoing. Secondly, the assumption of a search for efficiency is integral to the explanatory logic of the theory as constructed; it is assumed that states will seek the most efficient ways to provide the means for their strategic ends. Thus, it makes sense to consider cases where the search for efficiency appears to be highly pressing on several states simultaneously. As has been seen, this is provided by the double-edged sword of long-term pressures on capability affordability and the immediate fiscal shock of the financial crisis.

Regarding the number of cases selected, the methodological approach outlined above has elements of both quantitative and qualitative approaches. On the one hand, the approach is based on the observation of regularities of the phenomenon of capability mutualisation and the testing of hypothetical explanations for those occurrences based on certain structural-relational conditions. There are, however, a limited number of cases to study at each aspect of frontline distance. As such, the significance of the regularity or 'quantity' of cases of mutualisation is reflected in the aggregate number of initiatives considered. It should, however, be pointed out that high numbers of cases need not be crucial to the application of neorealist theory. Rather, the identification of regularities is conceived of as the means rather than the ends of the researcher (Waltz, 1979: 8; Weber, 1949: 80); the explanation of any regularity comes from theory, not the fact that the regularity is observed in high numbers.

On the other hand, and from the qualitative perspective, it has been argued that a deeper examination of motivations at unit level is also required to assess the degree to which systemic factors can be considered to have influenced outcomes, and indeed whether the logic of behaviour that is assumed by the theory is plausible. This deeper, qualitative empirical analysis poses challenges for a study encompassing five European states and the nine cases of mutualisation that will be

considered here. Although a large number study is not strictly necessary for the theory and methodology outlined above, this number of cases represents a compromise between the depth of qualitative empirical analysis required and the notion of a 'regularity' of outcome. The low number of cases may in some ways be unsatisfying, but it reflects the reality of a relatively small universe of cases within a given temporal period, and the need to invest time and resources into in-depth qualitative analysis, including semi-structured interviews. And, even when there is only one case of a certain form of mutualisation, as with that of functional distance from the frontline, it is still a legitimate to test to see 'whether things work in the way the theory suggests' (1997: 916).

The cases to be considered in the following chapters might be considered 'successful' examples, but would consideration of 'unsuccessful' cases be fruitful? An 'unsuccessful' case, i.e., where mutualisation was attempted but did not occur, would not necessarily be that helpful. Because neorealism assumes that causation is a two-way process, an attempt at a mutualisation initiative may not occur for a wide range of reasons at the unit-level, for example, through a lack of political attention, due to misaligned procurement cycles and so on. In this sense, the structural-relational configuration is causally permissive, it allows for mutualisation to happen in a certain way, it shoves states in a certain direction, but there may be many unit-level factors that might potentially knock it off course. To be methodologically useful, 'unsuccessful' cases would have to be those whereby a mutualisation initiative was mooted at the unit level in two states but did not go ahead due to reasons explicable by the theory, i.e., too high a risk of entrapment or abandonment. Unfortunately, no such cases were available with sufficient potential for research, perhaps because, if the theory is correct, it is axiomatic that they would be dismissed at an early stage<sup>27</sup>. As will be seen in the following case studies, however, some initiatives for very close cooperation that fall short of mutualisation, such as the Franco-British Combined Joint Expeditionary Force, can provide something close to such an 'unsuccessful'

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<sup>27</sup> Perhaps one such case is that which relates to the suggestion, reported in 2010, that the UK and France might share the patrols of their nuclear weapons-armed submarines (Borger and Norton-Taylor, *Guardian*, 19 March, 2010). The UK and France did not follow-up on this idea for reasons reportedly consistent with those outlined in this thesis (i.e., entrapment-abandonment risk). Unfortunately, the secrecy surrounding such nuclear weapons cooperation tends to militate against its selection as a deep case study.



case, and therefore this special case and that of *ad hoc* mutual dependence between France and the UK has also been included.

### *Presenting data within an analytical narrative*

The second issue is that of the analysis of state behaviour. The theory to be tested here is based on the view that structural-relational configurations have independent effects, and that these can be verified through comparison, based on the confirmatory logic that 'states similarly placed behave similarly despite their internal differences' (Waltz, 1996: 54). A methodological caveat has been added, however, which is that it is necessary to analyse outcomes in more depth to better assess the extent to which they can be regarded as being shaped by systemic variables; the low number of extant cases adds further weight to this caveat. The need to consider variables beyond the purview of the theory once more raises Waltz's observation that, 'Much is included in an analysis; little is included in a theory' (1996: 56). It is necessary then to compare empirical actuality against the expectations of the theory. To frame this qualitative approach, the thesis will therefore draw on the method of an 'analytical narrative'. An analytical narrative can be defined as an account of a given historical period or periods of empirical actuality, which is guided by a pre-existing theoretical framework; as such, an analytical narrative always deals with historical empirical actuality even while the theoretical tool of analysis (in this case a structural-relational configuration) is itself ahistorical in content (Jackson, 2011: 154).

This aspect of the methodological approach also explains why it is necessary to consider capability mutualisation initiatives within the context of the whole bilateral relationship from which they arise. The importance of variables outside the purview of the theory is not whether or how they might enable or act against the realisation of mutualisation in particular instances, but the extent to which they need to be untangled as causally significant from the structural-relational explanation. For example, the theory outlined in the previous chapter assumes that the logic of behaviour for subordinate states in an asymmetric alliance configuration is primarily to mitigate entrapment, and secondarily that of abandonment, by the dominant state. The fulfilment of these strategic ends then help shape the likelihood of capability mutualisation. But might it be that the individual occurrences of various forms of

capability mutualisation in contemporary Europe are in fact better explained by a unit-level factor external to the theory, such as compatibility of idiosyncratic security cultures, defence industrial policies, threat perceptions or political personalities? And might one or more of these factors be consistently decisive across several or all of the cases?

It is necessary then to first assess the expectations of the logic of behaviour of subordinate states under an asymmetric alliance before making the claim that such behaviour is vital to explaining the capability mutualisation. Comparison of the accounts of decision-makers allows that the plausibility of the theory may be questioned if another variable emerges in the analytical narrative as more persuasive across cases, or indeed if each case turns out to be so idiosyncratic as to be impervious to any kind of theoretical generalisation. In this way, the significance of unit level variables exogenous to the theory can be addressed in an *ad hoc* fashion as they arise over the course of the analytical narrative. Given that such variables may be of causal consequence *alongside* structural-relational variables, however, it does not make sense to set up 'competitive hypotheses'; the aim is to focus on assessing the plausibility of the causal effect of structural-relational configurations.

Thus, each case study chapter will be made up of three discrete analytical narrative sections, all of which are informed by the structural-relational theoretical approach set out above, and all of which assess the degree to which behaviour and outcomes align with three 'logics': that of behaviour, of means-ends crises and outcomes. These analytical narratives will draw on a variety of both primary and secondary sources as explained below.

#### Section one: the logic of behaviour in an asymmetric alliance

The purpose of this section is to assess the extent to which states' 'strategic ends', concrete interests and thus military capabilities are shaped by the logic of behaviour within an asymmetric alliance. The sources for this analytical narrative are multiple and include secondary sources dealing with historical approaches to foreign policy and military capabilities, primary sources in the form of interviews undertaken and

other official documents relating to government policies. Regarding the first section of each case study chapter on the logic of behaviour within an asymmetric alliance, interviewees have provided practitioners' insights into the nature of the US-European and European-European state relationships. Their reflections can be integrated with historical and secondary source analyses to make a judgement as to the plausibility of the logic of behaviour set out in the theory above. The justification of this logic of behaviour then provides the foundations for the subsequent two sections.

### Section two: the logic of the military capability crisis

Section two of each chapter demonstrates how the logic of behaviour informs the states' reactions to a crisis in the affordability and thus maintenance of a broad spectrum of military capabilities. Interviewees directly involved in the mutualisation initiatives provide direct evidence of the logic of the capability crisis and why it set in train a search for efficiency. This section also draws on arguments relating to the cause of the affordability crisis and on various data sets on European state defence spending. This analytical narrative will also provide valuable contextual material for deeper understanding of the subsequent section on concrete capability initiatives.

### Section three: the logic of military capability mutualisation

The final section of each chapter will consider military capability mutualisation initiatives against the theory developed over previous chapters and the hypotheses as to a systemic explanation for the variation in occurrence and form of the phenomenon. Here, interviewees provide both an insight into the practicalities of capability mutualisation, which helps to assess the degree to which these concrete initiatives do in fact align with the definition of the phenomenon set out by the thesis. They also allow for a check against both the logic of the hypotheses and the potential role of unit level factors that may cast doubt on the plausibility of the structural-relational configuration as a causal explanation. Other key documents in this section are the formal international agreements within which mutualisation initiatives are framed.

The conclusion of the thesis will provide a final comparative assessment of the application of the theory, and the hypotheses extracted from it, to the empirical case studies. The extent to which the independent causal effect of the structural-relational configurations can be confirmed will then rest on two factors. First, the extent to which capability mutualisation initiatives fall as outcomes within the expectations set out by the hypotheses. And secondly, the extent to which in looking at individual cases in considerable depth, it is plausible to separate out systemic from unit level factors. The strength of factors beyond the purview of the theory will be assessed on an *ad hoc* basis, either responding to claims raised in interviews or in secondary literature. As Waltz remarked, when deploying neorealist theory 'all sorts of information, along with a lot of good judgment, is needed' (1996: 56).

The preceding paragraphs reflect a need for a 'mixed methods' approach to answering the research questions and testing the hypotheses. In cases where there is a limited number of cases a more qualitative approach is often taken by researchers (Gallagher, 2013: 182). The thesis will bring in evidence not only from identifying and comparing regular outcomes by testing them against the hypotheses, but also through the deployment of qualitative techniques, including that of interviews with elite decision-makers directly involved in the genesis and operation of the mutualisation initiatives under investigation. Interviews thus enhance and bolster the quantitative aspect of the research methodology.

### *Elite interviews*

While neorealism may provide certain expectations of unit behaviour, it is not a theory of foreign policy, i.e., it does not explain how internal decisions are deliberated and concluded, though it may suggest certain likely strategies or dispositions (Waltz, 1996). It does not mean, however, that systemic factors do not have a bearing on 'internal' policy making and policy-makers. As Waltz notes, 'those who direct the activities of great powers are by no means free agents' (1979, 176). Here, Katznelson's conception of a 'macroanalytical' theoretical approach helps capture such a logic of behaviour. While configurations do not determine behaviour, they explain how behaviour is shaped by 'situational orders within which individuals think, interact, and choose.' And that,

‘Persons in this view, are embedded agents operating within relational fields that distinguish the possible from the impossible and the likely from the less likely.’ (1997: 83)

Thus, although the depths to which decision-makers are self-conscious of systemic pressures may vary considerably, it is a reasonable methodological step to assume that the actions of individuals, as well as states, are shaped by structural-relational configurations. Thus, interviews can provide crucial data for understanding state behaviour and assessing the extent to which structural-relational configurations may be claimed to shape outcomes (Lynch, 2013: 37).

#### i. Nature of evidence sought and approach to interviews

Interviews have been conducted for this thesis for two principal reasons. The first is to gather empirical data on the nature of the initiatives, not only on interviewees’ broader attitudes towards them. This is important because for most of the initiatives studied below, there is very little official literature available and what does exist goes into little detail on particular initiatives. It is necessary to establish whether such arrangements do in fact meet the definition of mutualisation set out in this thesis. As has been seen, while secondary literature is beginning to emerge, it is also relatively limited and does not cover all the cases in this thesis. Thus, interviewees with first-hand expertise and experience can answer questions as to the empirical actuality of the cooperation, and how mutualisation works in practice. The second purpose of interviews, as explained above, relates more directly to the methodology set out above, and this is the need to examine the expected logics of behaviour, crisis and outcome in the form of capability mutualisation.

Interviews were carried out according to a ‘semi-structured’ approach. A list of opening questions across a range of themes was sent to the interviewee in advance and then used as a framework for discussion in the interview itself (see Annex). If questions raised interesting responses that required departure from the framework this would be pursued (Gallagher, 2013: 193). Semi-structured interviews were chosen as they combine a basis for data comparison with the flexibility to depart

from the framework and explore understandings of key concepts and other explanations outside the purview of the theory. Interviews broadly followed the three logics set out above, i.e., of behaviour, crisis and outcome. Thus, they considered the dynamics of the relationship both with the US and with the partner state in each case, the specific political and economic context for the capability initiatives, and finally, regarding particular capability mutualisation initiatives, questions sought to understand how such cooperation was possible given the constraints and opportunities of international politics, conceived theoretically in the form of structural-relational configurations. This was done by attempting to tease out concerns over autonomy (or 'sovereignty' as a synonym), dependency and mutualisation, and the degree to which conceptions of similar or divergent interests and the compatibility of capabilities had an impact on actual decisions. Unit-level factors that may have been of significance but were not addressed within the theoretical framework were also considered or tackled in follow-up questions, particularly the role of differing cultural or domestic economic policies of relevance.

It is not a straightforward task to find evidence for the constraining and enabling force of structural-relational configurations on individual decision-makers. Analysis of the language used by decision-makers in interviews and in formal documentation is, however, made more simple by the relatively strong correlation between the terms set out in the theory and those used by decision-makers, such as interests, interdependence, autonomy/sovereignty and military capabilities. This is not to claim that the usage of such terms reflects those in the theory as a perfect representation, nor that decision-makers understand these terms in precisely the same way (Jones, 1993)<sup>28</sup>. It is, however, assumed by the rationalist means-ends action schema inherent in neorealism (Waltz, 1979: 118), and that language reflects the norms on which the theory is based and the usage of words in the day-to-day practice of decision-makers. Thus, interviewees and documentation can be expected to demonstrate a collective understanding of terms such as interests, mutual dependence and capabilities. Indeed, as individuals involved in the practical

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<sup>28</sup> Charles Jones argues that neorealism assumes a positivistic approach to language use, but this is not necessarily correct; Jackson argues very much to the contrary (2011). This difference of opinion may be related to the differences over whether causation is conceptualised as societal, i.e., governed by norms, or Humean and therefore 'efficient' or 'necessary'.

business of defence cooperation with other states, there must be a collective understanding of such terms.

## ii. Level of involvement, role and experience of interviewees

The criteria for selecting interviewees reflect the aims set out in the previous paragraphs, and are as follows. First, the interviewees needed sufficient knowledge of the capability initiatives to be able to explain how they would work on a practical basis and thus whether there is a correlation with the definition set out in this thesis. Second, in order that research be informed by those with significant insight and influence over the shape and form of the capability initiatives under investigation, those with both seniority and direct involvement were approached; indeed, most of those interviewed have been directly involved in the initiatives under investigation<sup>29</sup>. These interviewees include government officials, military officers, political advisers and senior industry figures. Some politicians were contacted for interview but no responses were forthcoming; time and resources were also limited, particularly for research trips abroad. This omission is manageable, however, in part because many interviewees had first-hand insights into the attitudes of the politicians they worked with, and this can be compared against documentary evidence of motivations for political support for the initiatives. And politicians would be unlikely to have the level of technical knowledge over the mutualisation initiatives such that sufficient empirical insight could be gained; for this reason, officials and military officers were prioritised. Thirdly, another group was interviewed on the basis that they have insights into the field gained through experience, but not necessarily direct involvement in the initiatives under investigation; these interviewees include former government officials and military officers and independent analysts with expertise in these areas.

## iii. Finding interviewees

Interviewees were contacted both by approaching existing contacts and via the technique of 'snow-balling', i.e., through recommendations and introductions from some interviewees to meet with others. Through professional experience, the author

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<sup>29</sup> See 'References' section for a list of interviewees.

has accumulated several contacts in the field of defence cooperation, both in the UK and across Europe. The author was Foreign Affairs and Defence Adviser in the Parliamentary Office of the Liberal Democrats between 2007 and 2010, providing research and advice to the party Leader and other Members of Parliament; and in 2013 was Chair of the Liberal Democrat Working Group on Europe. He was also a Visiting Fellow at the European Union Institute for Security Studies in 2010, where he wrote the paper *Franco-British Military Cooperation: A New Engine for European Defence?*, for which he undertook several elite interviews in London, Paris and Brussels. And finally, he was Director and Head of Defence and Security at Interel between 2010-2014, where he came into contact with senior figures in the defence industry from British, European and American companies. Existing contacts were approached for interview, and then asked to suggest others on the basis of the criteria outlined above. There are risks associated with snow-balling, particularly following particular professional or social networks (Rubin and Rubin, 1995: 68). The risk of this skewing the research is perhaps reduced by the nature of the phenomenon, which is that decision-makers involved in mutualisation are *de facto* small networks of professionals.

#### iv. Number of interviewees

Thirty interviews were carried out for the thesis. This represents a large body of empirical evidence given that all the interviews were focussed on the phenomenon of capability mutualisation in Europe, with an interview strategy accordingly directed at exploring issues involved in this phenomenon. On the other hand, the number of interviews related to the case study states and particular capability initiatives is somewhat smaller. The number is limited by three factors. First, not many individuals in any given state were involved in the genesis of the capability initiatives with sufficient insight into motivations and concerns, and as such there was a small pool of potential interviewees in every given case. Secondly, perhaps because capability mutualisation is a sensitive matter, not all those approached responded to requests for interviews. Finally, while the author is based in London, which enabled British and some other interviewees to be interviewed in one place (French officials were interviewed in London and Brussels), other interviews took place in Berlin and Strausberg in Germany, Brussels and Zeebrugge in Belgium and The Hague in the



Netherlands. Repeat visits were necessary and this was both time-consuming and expensive. One interview was conducted over the telephone, but given the nature of their roles, others preferred to be interviewed in their offices. As such, while there are several interviewees for each bilateral case study, there are fewer for some than others; it will be argued, however, that the methodological approach can accommodate a relatively small number of interviews per capability initiative.

#### v. Issues of trustworthiness, secrecy and spin

Regarding questions of the reliability of the interviews, there are several issues to explore here. First, defence is a field of policy which is more subject to secrecy than most, and indeed it is possible that technical matters of military capabilities that might have a bearing on mutualisation remain classified. This is a particularly pronounced issue in relation to cooperation in the field of nuclear weapons, special forces and intelligence. Mutualisation in these most sensitive areas is thus more difficult to explore than others, and is reflected in this thesis in the relative paucity of information available on nuclear weapons cooperation. Secondly, there is always a question as to general trustworthiness and particularly the risk of 'spin' when conducting research interviews with officials, wherein officials may exaggerate the official line, and remain silent on areas where they disagree, as well as provide personal bias in opinion that may skew a researcher's assessment of wider motivations for actions. Thus, perhaps the greatest danger when interviewing those representing institutions, be they governments or armed forces, is that the interviewees will feel it necessary to provide 'the official line', and will not be candid with the interviewer.

There are some techniques, however, to mitigate this challenge. First, interviewees were able to establish the terms on which their contribution would be included in the thesis. Two interviewees declined to allow any form of attribution of the information provided at all, and thus their contributions had to remain general, background material that informed the overall argument of the thesis. Others provided information on the basis of anonymity. As such, the trustworthiness of their comments and susceptibility to putting a spin on the facts is reduced by these conditions. Finally, the question of personal bias in opinion or offering an analysis

that may be idiosyncratic and not widely shared, is another challenge. The main technique to mitigate these issues is that of triangulation, and is discussed in more detail below.

#### vii. Triangulation and saturation

A means to reduce the possibility of distorting evidence and to account for any glaring discrepancies in accounts is to compare and contrast, or triangulate, interviews against each other (Gallagher, 2013: 194). The methodological choice of having three overarching case studies with nine initiatives within them and four different states ought to provide at least a corrective to misinterpreting idiosyncratic factors. But it remains the case that the concerns set out above require some further mitigation. First, this can be done by drawing on other resources, notably government statements, articles and interviews in order to compare and contrast evidence, although in some cases these are subject to the same caveats, particularly of 'spin' that are listed above. Second, the interviewing of expert opinion at one step removed from the institutions provides a potential corrective; these more detached viewpoints are offered by the retired officials and officers and independent analysts interviewed for this thesis.

Regarding the relatively small number of interviews for each capability mutualisation initiative, these issues are a challenge, but are manageable. First, it should be remembered that in the final analysis, the dependent variable under investigation is not the behaviour of individual decision-makers, but rather the outcome of capability mutualisation. The purpose of examining behaviour is a secondary one that attempts to separate out the causal strands of systemic and unit level factors. Thus, the focus of the interviews, aside from better understanding the technical operation of mutualisation initiatives, is on the general, cross-cutting themes of autonomy, interests and mutual dependence, and from the *ad hoc* perspective, factors such as culture and domestic industrial policy. Secondly, the number of people involved in taking the decisions to go ahead with capabilities initiatives was small in each state. Thus, the 'purposive sampling' of key, senior individuals, triangulated with more independent but expert individuals provides a reasonably robust cross-section of opinion for each case study state (Lynch, 2013: 41). Finally, it is possible to consider

the thirty interviews in aggregate as representative of the phenomenon of capability mutualisation in Europe. From this perspective, the researcher has discerned considerable parallels in all the interviews, regardless of the states involved and the form of capabilities. It is the case that by the end of the thirty interviews, a 'saturation point' or repetition of similar reasoning and logic of arguments and themes became apparent, which will become clear in the following case study chapters (Rubin and Rubin, 1995: 73).

### *Other sources*

Interviews provide the bulk of primary evidence for the investigations into the concrete cases of capability mutualisation, i.e., the logic of mutualisation, and provide important supporting evidence for the other two sections on the logic of behaviour and crisis. The other key primary evidence is that of the formal bilateral agreements between governments themselves and of any other official supporting documentation on the workings of those agreements and concrete initiatives in particular. Some articles written in specialist military policy magazines and think-tank literature were also drawn on to further gather the perspectives of officials and analysts. In fact, there is rather little of such literature, hence the importance of interviews to gather basic empirical evidence. For the more historical analytical narrative on the 'logic of behaviour' research was done by drawing on historical works and journal articles that reflected the key debates around the foreign and defence policies of the case study states, focussing particularly on the post-war period. This was supplemented with elite interviews to probe the plausibility of the arguments in the secondary literature. For the second analytical narrative, on the logic of crisis, the thesis draws on a literature around the affordability of military capability and defence inflation. And finally, for figures relating to defence expenditure, the thesis draws on the figures collated by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI).

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **FRANCE AND THE UK: THE 'LANCASTER HOUSE' TREATIES 2008-2010**

#### **i. Introduction**

Franco-British military cooperation is not a recent phenomenon. For over a century since the *Entente Cordiale* of 1904, the UK and France have had a cooperative, albeit mercurial partnership in international affairs (Waites, 1971; Boyer et al, 1989; Mayne et al, 2004). And while their policies and concrete interests have often diverged, they have shared vital security interests ever since. Allies during two world wars, NATO member states throughout the Cold War to the present day, collaborators at Suez and more recently partners in several post-Cold War military interventions, they have a long history of cooperation in foreign policy and military operations. The Cold War saw some significant Franco-British defence industrial collaboration, and over the post-Cold War period there has been a consistent deepening of the defence relationship across both industrial and operational fields (UK Government, 2000). The 2010 'Lancaster House' treaties and associated cooperation initiatives thus represent on the one hand a degree of continuity with the recent past, but as will be seen, can also be viewed as a 'step change', underlining a new commitment to deeper forms of defence cooperation (Jones, 2010: 23; Pannier, 2016: 16).

The Treaty on Defence and Security Cooperation (TDSC), signed at Lancaster House in 2010, sets out and codifies for the first time the aims and objectives of bilateral Franco-British defence cooperation (UK Government, 2011a). Dubbed by the British media the '*entente frugale*', the treaty was signed in the context of the 2008 financial crisis and the cumulative impact of years of flat real-terms growth in defence budgets in both states (Robinson, 2010). The signing of the TDSC was, however, also accompanied by announcements of new bilateral military capability initiatives that represent unprecedentedly deep cooperation, touching on some of the most sensitive issues of autonomy. The treaty saw the emergence of a significantly higher aspiration for, and acceptance of, mutual dependence for the generation of military capabilities, and, albeit to a lesser degree, for their joint deployment. This

contemporary case study of bilateral defence cooperation thus provides fertile empirical ground for theory-guided research that seeks to explain why and how states are prepared to create conditions of mutual dependence of the generation and deployment of military capabilities, and the way in which structural-relational variables shape such cooperation.

The first section of the chapter will take the form of an analytical narrative structured around the logic of behaviour expected within an asymmetric alliance configuration. The intention will be to demonstrate that despite the many differences in their approaches to foreign policy and defence, the strategies of the UK and France are consistent with the kind of behaviour expected from subordinate states in an asymmetric alliance configuration, and that this can be seen in the pursuit of the three strategic ends identified above. The second section will show how in recent years France and the UK have faced an acute challenge to the sustainability of their military capabilities. This section will explore the 'logic of a crisis' in their strategic ends as subordinate states in an asymmetrical alliance. It will be seen that their response has been to seek greater efficiency in the generation and deployment of military capabilities through the bilateral cooperation announced alongside the Lancaster House treaties. The final section of this chapter will use the theoretical approach set out above to demonstrate how structural-relational constraints and opportunities shape the occurrence and form of concrete capability mutualisation initiatives, and hence the possibility for greater efficiency through cooperation. To do this, the final section of the chapter will therefore focus on concrete cases selected from the capability initiatives that were launched alongside the TDSC in 2010 (UK Government, 2010a).

## **ii. The logic of behaviour: the strategic ends of France and the UK under an asymmetric alliance**

Both France and the UK have a long history of fielding a broad spectrum of military capabilities at scale in the service of national territorial defence and considerable overseas interests. Both were regarded as Great Powers until the Second World War (Waltz, 1979: 162). However, the subsequent emergence of the US and Soviet Union as bipolar superpowers, and the cost of maintaining their colonies and

rebuilding shattered social and economic fabric reduced their post-war role to that of allies subordinate to the US. Many have highlighted American resistance to the Franco-British intervention at Suez in 1956 as the moment that the reality of this status was finally accepted by decision-makers. It is also often argued that France and the UK went on to draw very different lessons over how to relate to US power in the aftermath of Suez (De Durand 2010; Alford, 1989: 85; Hague, 1990: 20; Waltz 1979: 162). The so-called 'Suez paradigm' of irreconcilable British Atlanticism and French Gaullism has come to characterise apparently fundamental differences in foreign policy in the form of a 'Euro-Atlantic dilemma' (De Durand, 2010: 5; Howorth, 2005). Yet it will be argued that when it comes to the structural-relational configurations that shape the context for cooperation on military capabilities, the importance of this debate can be exaggerated. France and the UK wrestled with similar problems in their shift from considerable pre-war autonomy to that of constrained subordinate allies in a highly asymmetric alliance. And this had a profound effect on the ends to which their military capabilities would from then on be used.

By drawing on the theory developed above, that subordinate states in an asymmetric alliance configuration tend to be pushed towards a set of strategic ends, shaped by structural-relational context, the following section will detail how the UK and France have used, and continue to use, their military capabilities to serve these ends. The first strategic end is that which this thesis defines as the 'struggle for influence' over the dominant state. As has been argued, the primary risk for subordinate states under a heavily asymmetric alliance is entrapment into the politico-military policies of the dominant state. The second strategic end is the need to hedge against the unlikely but potentially catastrophic risk of total abandonment by the dominant state. The final and more immediate strategic end is the retention of sufficient capabilities to act autonomously for the pursuit of core territorial defence and idiosyncratic or 'positive' interests.

### *Mitigating entrapment - the struggle for influence*

Following Suez, the UK accepted that it was no longer possible to act militarily in defence of its interests without the tacit approval of the US (Hague, 1990: 20)<sup>30</sup>. British freedom of action in foreign policy was increasingly measured against the so-called 'special relationship' with the US, which came to form the 'bedrock reality of the UK's international position' (Clarke, 2008: 4).<sup>31</sup> As Edward Heath, former British Prime Minister and Chief Whip of the Conservative party at the time of the Suez crisis later reflected, 'it forced many of the British establishment to accept that the sun was setting on the British Empire and that America was the new superpower.' (Heath, 1998: 177). After Suez, British foreign policy would no longer be managed according to an assumption of great power autonomy, but instead by drawing close to the US in an attempt to garner influence over politico-military strategy and particular military operations.

The contention that the UK pursues a struggle for influence over its so-called 'pre-eminent ally' (UK Government, 2010b: 59) holds considerable support among scholars, decision-makers and analysts. Colin Gray, for example, describes it as a 'geo-political fact' that the UK must 'follow in close or extended order in the wake of the policy course charted in Washington' (Gray, 2008: 17). In a 2009 study drawing on interviews with policy-makers in the British government, William Wallace and Christopher Phillips observed that the desire for influence over the US remains dominant in UK thinking on defence policy, and reflects a longstanding view that policy is built on a 'clear trade-off between defence contribution and expectations of influence' (2008: 267). They add,

'this investment must be measured in additional British influence over the direction and detail of US foreign policy and in the contribution this added influence makes to Britain's claim to 'punch above its weight' in world affairs.' (2008: 282).

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<sup>30</sup> Suez is a watershed moment, but of course the UK's dependence on American power developed gradually over the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Very close ties were established during World War II. And an unavoidable need to act in coordination with the US was a strategic consideration for the UK as early as 1903 (Monger, 1963, 127).

This struggle for influence has direct consequences for the type and form of capabilities that the UK generates and deploys. As Bob Ainsworth, a former British Defence Secretary, has remarked,

‘our ability to influence, our ability to participate, is what potentially maintains our position and we ought to recognise that in the decisions that we’re taking and the structures of the forces that we maintain.’ (Chatham House, 2010: 38)

Michael Codner has drawn a similar conclusion, arguing that influence over the US is sustained and developed through a contribution which has the strategic significance to be genuinely influential.’ (Codner, 2009: 3) Interviews carried out for this thesis in the context of the Lancaster House initiatives strongly corroborate these analyses. The effect of the vast military power asymmetry in the relationship is clearly apparent to those who work in the field and thus provides a crucial strategic context for bilateral cooperation with France. British officials acknowledge that the constraints of US power on UK military autonomy are extremely high and that the UK is ‘unlikely to do anything that they [the US] would not want, or not mind’ (Interview 2, January 2015; Interview 5, March 2015). Similarly, a former senior MOD official argues that,

‘The fundamental point is the size and power of the US. Everybody wants to be close, or at least not to offend Washington. The reality of transatlantic security is that everyone wants to sit next to the big kid on the school bus.’ (Interview 1, September 2015).

The French response to the Suez aftermath and the subsequent approach to handling US dominance in Europe is often presented as the antithesis of that of the UK (Bozo, 2001; De Durand, 2010). Under the presidency of Charles De Gaulle, France came to guard and develop jealously the autonomy of French defence policymaking and capabilities. This is seen most prominently in the development of the fully autonomous ‘*force de frappe*’ nuclear deterrent and in the decision to leave NATO’s military command structure in 1966 (Bozo, 2001: 3). As Anand Menon puts it, these ‘notions of independence and military autonomy were central to the Gaullist



vision' (Menon, 1994: 74) <sup>32</sup>. And indeed, several interviewees stressed that the French commitment to autonomy, particularly over its nuclear weapons capability, remains stronger than that of the UK (Interviews 2, January 2015; Interview 5, March 2015).

French policy has, however, evolved significantly in the last twenty-five years. Scholars tend to highlight the end of the Cold War and the advent of the First Gulf War as the major turning point for France in its approach towards the US (Howorth, 1997:26; De Durand, 2010; Freedman and Karsh, 1993: 350). The lack of presence and influence alongside the US during operations in Iraq compounded the negative impact of the largely vanished role of France as a Western territorial bulwark against Soviet forces, as well as the reduced salience of nuclear weapons in international diplomacy. Even if it had always been more rhetorical than substantive, the notion of France as a 'third force' was effectively redundant following the systemic shift from bipolarity to unipolarity (Howorth, 1997: 26). In the post-Cold War period it became clear that France would pay a price in terms of lost political influence and military effectiveness if it continued to stand aloof from the US and other NATO allies. Instead it began to push for a greater role in US and NATO-led operations (Blunden, 2000: 20; Bozo, 2014). As Etienne de Durand has argued,

'the ability to participate in US-led coalitions at a significant level... emerge[d] as the new coin of international influence, thus validating in part Britain's approach and leading to a reappraisal of the Gaullist roots of French strategy.' (De Durand, 2010: 5).

And, as other scholars have pointed out, while it opposed the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003, during this time, 'France continued to act as a firm ally of the USA, participating strongly in the American-led military campaign in Afghanistan' (Howorth, 2010: 14). A former British official describes the logic of the apparent French reconciliation towards the US, 'Washington does bilateral relationships. They deal with everyone on a bilateral basis - and Paris is moving towards the US' (Interview 1, September 2015).

Although the decision itself was not unexpected and came after years of closer engagement (Howorth, 2010: 11; Rieker, 2013), the French return to NATO command structures in 2009 provides perhaps the strongest evidence of such a decisive shift in French policy (Bozo, 2014). In recent scholarship based on several interviews with French military officers and officials, Alice Pannier has argued that 'there is now a broad and thus possibly durable departure from the 'Suez paradigm''; France is now 'an exceptionally good ally of the Americans and the British' (Pannier, 2016: 3). So much so, in fact, that the relationship remains 'intensely competitive' (Interview 2). There has been, for example, some disgruntlement inside the UK MOD over the success of the French in demonstrating that they can also be dependable allies for the US (Interview 1, September 2015).

The French approach towards the US following the Suez crisis was undoubtedly different from that of the UK. And it remains different in important respects to the present day. The theoretical perspective of this thesis suggests, however, that such behaviour was not born of fundamentally different strategic ends from that of the UK. As Menon and Freedman have argued, the security policies of France and the UK during the Cold War were essentially shaped by the same strategic systemic constraints of the Cold War (Menon; Freedman, 1997: 157). Within the logic of an asymmetric alliance, the UK and France pursued a very different approach to the US, but for the same strategic end, i.e., the mitigation of entrapment into American policy, and the preservation of as much freedom of action as possible.

Given the low risk of abandonment by the US in the Cold War, there was little threat to France in partially 'moving away' from the US in order to mitigate entrapment. And from a theoretical perspective, the high flexibility of policy in a bipolar alliance in fact encourages unilateralism because there is such a small risk of strategic abandonment (Snyder, 1984: 495; Waltz, 1979: 170). This divergence in approach, with the UK 'moving closer' and France 'moving away' does raise some questions over the coherence of Snyder's bipolar alliance security dilemma. In a multipolar system the response is to move away to avoid entrapment, but Snyder argued that in a heavily asymmetric alliance both were plausible approaches (Snyder, 1997: 185).

The key point is that these are essentially different tactics towards the strategic end of the struggle for influence, whether achieved by negative or positive means.

And while De Gaulle made much of positioning his country as a 'third force' in the Cold War, France never left the NATO alliance, nor cast doubt on its commitment to defend Europe from attack alongside the US (Bozo, 2001: 8). As one British official who has worked closely with the French MOD for many years argues, the degree of French strategic autonomy and the likelihood of any 'European' strategic autonomy was always overplayed, 'Much of it was rhetoric. It was never realistic that France or Europe could balance US power.' (Interview 1, September 2015). Thus, the clear divergence in French and British approaches to the US has tended to obscure a possibly more important observation, certainly in terms of defence cooperation, which is that since Suez, France and the UK pursued different policies but towards the same strategic ends. Some have noted this, however. Historian André Fontaine argued that the 'essential differences' were 'less about aims than about method' (Fontaine, 2004: 200). And a similar point is well put by De Durand, who argues that,

'Beyond the common willingness to rely on military prowess as a means to leverage international influence, the two countries have historically diverged in precisely how to pursue this quest for strategic importance at the political and military levels' (2010: 4).

In this context, the significance of the Lancaster House treaties is seen by scholars as evidence that France and the UK have now reached a high degree of alignment in their approach to dealing with the US, as Pannier argues convincingly (2015: 3). As will be seen, however, the theory deployed in this thesis suggests that the flexibility of policy inherent in the asymmetric alliance configuration will remain a significant barrier to the closest forms of defence cooperation, and particularly for the mutualisation of capabilities close to or on the frontline. Scholars should perhaps be careful not to overstate the implications of Franco-British 'strategic convergence' or the end of the 'Suez paradigm' for defence cooperation (De Durand, 2010: 5; Pannier, 2016). On the other hand, while France and the UK have moved closer on operational cooperation, significant Franco-British bilateral industrial cooperation has a long pedigree. Even at the height of the French pursuit of a Gaullist defence policy,

there were negotiations with the UK about unprecedentedly deep cooperation in defence aerospace technology (House of Commons, 1967). The implications of this theoretical perspective will be considered in greater detail below. Nevertheless, it remains the case that there is an increasingly aligned French and British 'struggle for influence' over the US, and such behaviour is consistent with that of subordinate states under an asymmetric alliance.

### *Hedging against abandonment*

The second strategic end for states under an asymmetric alliance is to hedge against the possibility of abandonment by the dominant state. While the attempt at influence over US policy is pivotal to British and French strategies, they also seek to ensure some autonomous military capacity in the event of dissolution of the alliance. Although the UK positioned itself ever more closely to the US following Suez, including through defence industrial dependencies, it remained (and remains) wary of sacrificing its defence industrial and operational autonomy completely. British decision-makers have continued to seek the means to act autonomously from the US where necessary and thus to hedge against future abandonment, however unlikely. This concern is clear in debates as early as the 1965 Plowden Report on the British aircraft industry, and the subsequent though eventually abortive Franco-British cooperation over a principal fighter aircraft, the Anglo-French Variable Geometry (AFVG) jet (House of Commons, 1967). Contemporary political debates demonstrate that cooperation was then driven by fears that, in the absence of collaboration with France, the aerospace industries of both countries would decline, and that this would inevitably lead to dependence on American industry (House of Commons, 1967).

In contemporary British security policy, hedging against future uncertainty still requires the preservation of key elements of an indigenous defence industry, including a critical mass of technological understanding or 'body of knowledge' (House of Common Defence Committee, 2012). While the most recent UK defence industrial policy is more ambiguous about sovereign requirements (UK MOD, 2012), industry sources argue that, 'UK sovereign capability needs are more or less expressed in the Defence Industrial Strategy paper' (UK Government, 2005;

Interview 7, April 2015). These capabilities include critical technologies and platforms, including for example, the ability to develop and build submarines and maintain autonomous cryptographic communications. Unit-level economic arguments associated with maintaining a wider technological base for spill-over into civilian technology and keeping jobs and investment onshore are also critical arguments for an indigenous defence industry, and it is very difficult to untangle these two arguments. But the strategic ends of hedging and autonomy remain important. As one senior British official involved in negotiations over the TDSC argues, 'The capacity to make fast jets, drone technologies, to build modern warships is still pretty precious, and not necessarily economic.' (Interview 5, March 2015). This requirement for a hedge against future abandonment is well put by former British Defence and Foreign Secretary Sir Malcolm Rifkind. In the context of the TDSC he argued that, 'in the long-term neither the UK nor France can be sure of the policy of the US or of Russia and so we need to preserve capabilities for an uncertain future' (Jones, 2010: 20).

Unlike the UK, France had to rebuild its industrial autonomy from the US in the aftermath of the Second World War. In line with its post-Suez policy, France has long placed a greater emphasis on indigenous defence industry than the UK. As Fluerant and Quaeu put it,

'Since the 1950s, industrial defense equipment has been widely understood as the foundation of national strategic autonomy, alongside nuclear deterrence.' (Fluerant and Quaeu, 2014: 2).

And, as one senior British official involved in negotiating the treaties argues, 'Autonomy matters more to France than the UK. The UK is accustomed to dependencies with US' (Interview 5, March 2015). Thus, both France and the UK pursue this particular strategic end, but they do so differently, and to a matter of degree; it may not always be the case that both states are aligned as to which capabilities are crucial for their definition of industrial autonomy.

### *Autonomy for positive or idiosyncratic interests*

The final strategic end for states under asymmetric alliance is to retain immediate operational autonomy for the defence of their interests in the form of basic territorial defence tasks and for the pursuit of idiosyncratic or positive interests. While the UK no longer expects to launch major military operations without the US (UK Government, 2003), it retains significant overseas territorial commitments such as the Falkland Islands that could require advanced expeditionary capabilities to defend. The UK has also carried out smaller-scale autonomous operations such as that in Sierra Leone in 2001, a scenario that has not been explicitly ruled out for the future. For both states, a degree of defence industrial autonomy is deemed vital to underpin operational autonomy. And for France, autonomy for operations at significant scale is considered vital, and remains so even as the strength of Gaullism and the 'Suez paradigm' fade over time. This commitment was expressed in the 2008 *Livre Blanc* (Government of France, 2008: 10) and has been demonstrated by successive recent operations in Africa, including Chad and Mali.

Idiosyncratic or positive interests might also include those situations where the US might determine it has no interest but in which European states believe they do have significant interests at stake. Such interests reflect the fear of what might be called 'partial abandonment' by the US (Snyder, 1984). And indeed, scholars have argued convincingly that such concerns were an important factor in establishing the EU CSDP (Howorth, 2007: 55). The fear that the US would abandon Europe in a critical area such as the Balkans or Mediterranean was important (Interview 1, September 2015). In order, however, for such missions to be launched, states need to agree that they have a shared interest at stake. And, as has been pointed out in chapter two, such an alignment is very difficult for subordinate states to achieve in the absence of a strongly shared negative interest such as that embodied in Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty (Eilstrup-Sangiovanni, 2014).

Since the Second World War, the UK and France have resourced internally a considerable proportion of the military capabilities considered necessary to meet their strategic ends, as they are conceived in the foregoing analysis. In particular, they have ensured a degree of hedging against abandonment and operational

autonomy through the preservation of significant indigenous defence industries. And, since the end of the Cold War both states have maintained sufficient capabilities to contribute significant forces to American-led operations to mitigate entrapment risks. Developments in recent years have, however, brought the sustainability of the military means necessary to meet these strategic ends into question. It is impossible to quantify and describe precisely the scale and shape of military capabilities required to meet these strategic ends, and thus, when there is a potential crisis. There are, however, some useful 'rule of thumb' assumptions used by practitioners. As has been seen, Codner refers to an offer of strategic military significance to a US-led operation (Codner, 2009: 3). And French and British officials often speak of the need for a 'broad spectrum' of capabilities or of a 'balanced force', which is of sufficient scale to meet concrete interests in the service of strategic ends, including the sustainment of a defence industrial base sufficient to provide the capabilities to sustain a high degree of operational autonomy (Jones, 2010: 13-15). It is therefore to the prevailing concerns over the shortfall between military means and strategic ends that the next section will turn.

### **iii. The logic of a crisis: French and British strategic ends under pressure**

#### *The affordability of military capability and the need for efficiency*

It has been argued that the strategic ends of subordinate states in an asymmetric alliance are shaped by structural-relational factors, but the crisis in the affordability of military capability for the UK and France can only be explained at both system and unit level. As Milward argued, states will resource their military spending according to a 'strategic synthesis' of system and unit-level factors (Milward, 1979: 18). To the extent that neither British nor French defence spending, at around 2% or just below, is anything close to what their respective gross domestic product (GDP) would in principle allow, resourcing of defence is an issue on which domestic explanations clearly have a vital bearing. There are, for example, domestic political pressures in both states to focus spending on 'vote-winning' areas such as health, education and pensions; in France at the time of the Lancaster House treaties, defence was identified as a priority area for cuts (Maulny, 2010: 2; Brune et al, 2010: 7). The wider

economic performance of both states in terms of total GDP is also a factor that either constrains or enables greater investment in military capabilities.

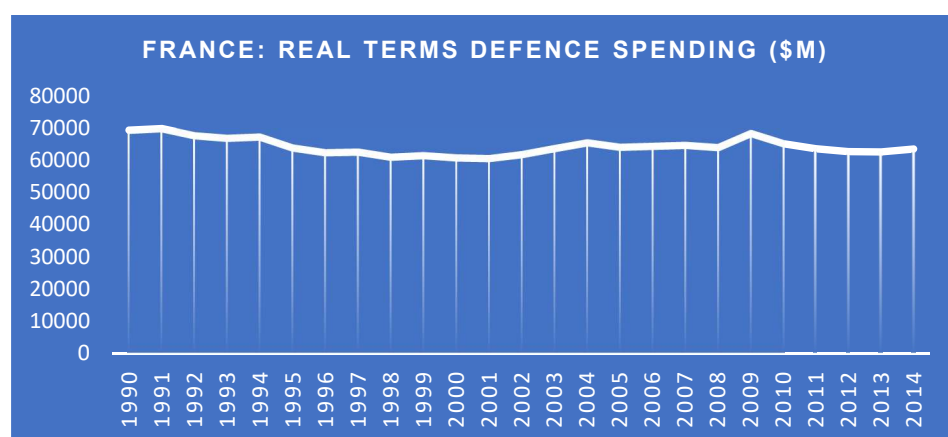
Yet this shortfall in internal means to resource strategic ends is also shaped decisively by systemic factors. As argued in the previous chapter, the vast asymmetry of US military power serves both to pacify relations between European NATO neighbours and to guarantee security from external state-on-state aggression; this provides for the possibility of 'free-riding' to a greater or lesser degree on the US for security provision against external threats (Waltz, 1979; Joffe, 1984). Subordinate states do not free-ride to the extent where they abandon their military capabilities completely, however, because they must resource the strategic ends outlined above. Yet there is a degree to which there is a disconnection between national defence spending and the overall security provision of the alliance, and this is likely to create a downward pressure on spending (Waltz, 1979: ref). And there is a second pressure on defence capabilities, and that is the system-wide phenomenon of above-real-terms inflation in the cost of generating and deploying military capabilities, as described in chapter one.

The challenge of maintaining military capabilities to meet the strategic ends outlined above has become acute for France and the UK in recent years, but it is by no means wholly new. The difficulty of sustaining an indigenous industrial base for the generation of military capabilities has concerned the UK and France for decades, at least as long ago as the 1960s when they embarked on their first joint defence industrial programmes, including the Anglo-French Variable Geometry (AFVG) jet and the more successful cooperation on military helicopters, the Jaguar fighter jet and the Martel missile (Hussain, 1989: 129). While the defence inflation phenomenon also impacts the smaller, non-equipment producer states in terms of the unit-cost of the capabilities they acquire, it is critical for those very few states, among them the UK and France, that seek to maintain significant operational autonomy, or the major elements thereof, through an indigenous defence industrial base. In the absence of an indigenous industrial option, dependencies will be created on others and security of supply will be put at risk; in the case of European states this usually means reliance on American industry.

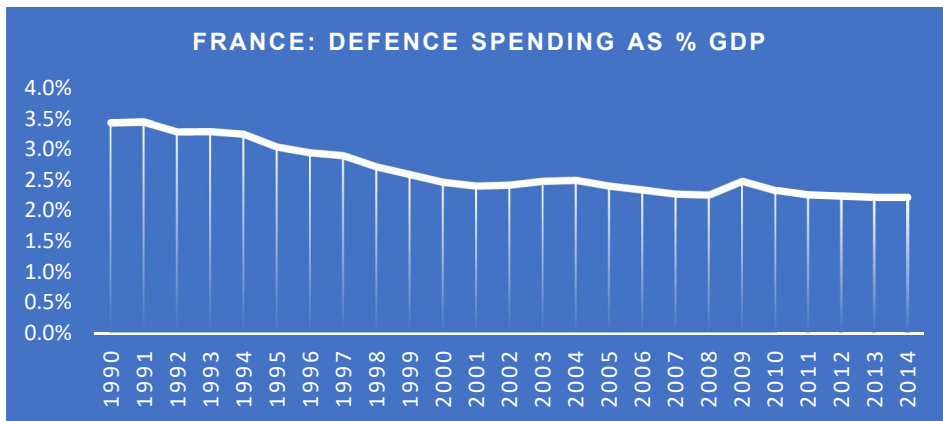


To a large degree, flat defence budgets have been an on-going trend in Western Europe since the Second World War (Alexander; Garden, 2001: 513). Up until the 1970s, however, the UK and France could meet a shortfall in internal means by drawing down those forces allocated to their previous colonial commitments. The end of the Cold War provided another opportunity for both countries to put their resources and commitments into better balance; a gradual reconfiguration of forces away from territorial defence towards expeditionary operations continued throughout the 1990s. In 1996 France announced the end of military conscription, while the UK Strategic Defence Review (SDR) of 1998 opted to prioritise the development of expeditionary forces over the large numbers of tanks and fast jets held over from the Cold War era (UK Government, 1998: 5). Over the last two decades, however, both states have found it increasingly difficult not only to maintain the viability of their national defence industries but also to sustain the breadth and scale of military capabilities necessary to pursue influence with the US and attend to their other strategic ends. The 2008 financial crisis and the major operations in Afghanistan (and in Iraq for the UK) gave greater urgency to decision-makers' considerations over how defence spending efficiency might be made more efficient.

The trend of flat-real terms budgets and the resulting effects can be observed in both the UK and France. According to Martial Foucault, in France 'over the period 1980-2010, GDP growth averaged 1.7% while the defence budget (not including pensions) grew by only 0.15%' (Foucault, 2012:13). This trend can be seen in figures 4.1 and 4.2.

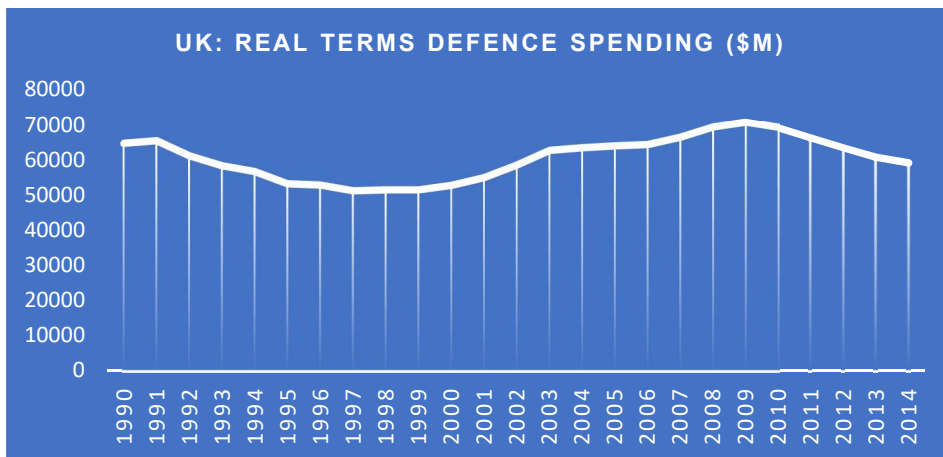


**Figure 4.1. Real terms French defence spending 1990 - 2014 (source: SIPRI)**

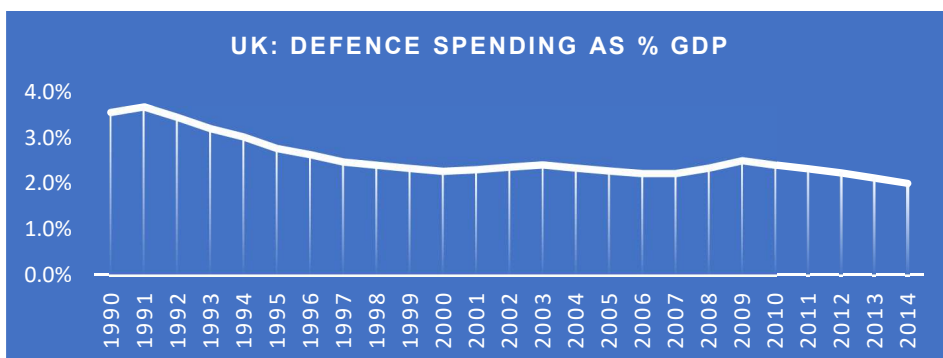


**Figure 4.2. French defence spending as share of GDP 1990-2014 (source: SIPRI)**

In the UK, there was significant real terms growth in overall defence spending from \$55bn in 2001 to a peak of \$71bn in 2009. This was in large part, however, due to major operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, the costs of which were funded from outside the core defence budget (SIPRI). And over the same period defence spending as a share of GDP fell from 2.3% to 2%; these trends in UK spending are shown in figures 4.3 and 4.4.



**Figure 4.3. Real terms British defence spending 1990-2014 (source: SIPRI)**



**Figure 4.4. British defence spending as share of GDP 1990-2014 (source: SIPRI)**

### *The 2008 financial crisis – capability crunch*

The fear of senior officials and officers in the UK and France in the few years leading up to the Lancaster House treaties was that there was an imminent threat to the 'broad spectrum' of their capabilities in sufficient scale across the range of defence activities, and of a defence industrial base able to provide for the most sensitive technologies and capabilities to sustain operational autonomy. As has been discussed, France and the UK have arguably struggled to meet elements of their strategic ends since the 1960s at least, but two issues emerged in the last decade that would pile further pressure on the sustainability of their military capabilities. The first was the struggle to perform to expectations alongside the US, and the second was the fiscal fall-out from financial crisis, the gravity of which began to emerge in late 2008.

In March 2008, the first Franco-British summit under Prime Minister Gordon Brown and President Nicolas Sarkozy took place against a difficult backdrop for both in their relations with the US. Both faced pressure to improve their contributions to US-led operations in Afghanistan, and for the UK, also in Iraq. Both were, however, struggling to demonstrate credibility to the US with their overstretched forces (*Guardian*, February 9, 2010). The British, fighting on two fronts, had badly damaged their reputation with the US by failing to maintain order in their sector in Southern Iraq (Porter, 2010: 371).

The risk to the French and British struggle for influence over the US was thus an area of common concern. The Franco-British summit *Communiqué* of 2008, for example, noted that Afghanistan was a 'strategic matter' for both the UK and France and identified a joint initiative on increasing helicopter capacity to their operations (UK Government, 2008). And it was not only the ability to maintain credibility and influence acting alongside the US that was a cause for concern. There were also strong signals from Washington that the US would not always be present to assist with security in the European neighbourhood. According to one British official, there was 'a common judgement that over the long-term US attention is moving away from Europe' (Interview 2, January 2015). If such operations were to take place without

the US, a lack of breadth and scale of capabilities could limit or endanger their success. And both states were particularly concerned at the lack of 'strategic enablers', the 'low density, high demand' capabilities required to carry out autonomous missions, notably strategic airlift and key enablers such as intelligence and reconnaissance assets (Biscop, 2012: 78).

The Franco-British discussions at the 2008 bilateral summit thus reflected a common problem of reconciling constrained defence spending and increased costs with the need to maintain sufficient breadth and scale in capabilities to retain influence with the US, and all the while to maintain indigenous defence industrial capacity and an ability to act autonomously for smaller operations. In this context France and the UK began to look more seriously at finding greater efficiencies through deeper cooperation. The rationale of cooperation for greater efficiency was noted in a meeting between French and American officials following the 2008 summit. In discussion with American counterparts, Francois Richier, President Sarkozy's National Security Adviser, noted the importance of this shared Franco-British analysis and an 'agreement on the need to focus on capabilities, and the ways and means to increase them without any increases in funds.' (US Government Note, 2008).

The 2008 Franco-British summit thus began a new dialogue around this logic of cooperation for efficiency and saw the agreement of a small number of proposed cooperative initiatives, including potential cooperation on aircraft carriers and joint support for the A400M transport aircraft (UK Government, 2008). Subsequently, the 2008 UK *Green Paper* on defence, put together by the then Labour Government in advance of the 2010 General Election also began to talk about cooperation with partners and introduced the concept of relying on others through deeper defence cooperation (UK MOD, 2008: 32). And then, against an already difficult context, the 2008 financial crisis provided a new jolt to the British and French public finances. As one British official puts it in relation to the Lancaster House treaties,

'The problems pre-dated the financial crisis, but that only served to compound the effect. The cost of defence is likely to grow and neither of us can sustain everything.' (Interview 2, January 2015).

In May 2010, a Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition took over under Prime Minister David Cameron. The new British coalition government was faced with both the accumulated effects of inflationary trends in capabilities since the defence reviews of a decade earlier, and intense short-term pressure in the form of Treasury demands to cut the defence budget in real terms by 8% over four years. According to a senior aide to Prime Minister Cameron the 2010 Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) was carried out within an 'economic straitjacket',

'The fiscal situation was perhaps worst in defence. The finances were completely out of control. They were carrying a huge ball and chain.' (Interview 4, January 2015).

As a result, the UK Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR), which was broadly contemporaneous with the Lancaster House treaties, amounted to a significant retrenchment on the 1998 Strategic Defence Review (SDR). The review imposed an 8% cut on the defence budget over four years and brought into balance a ten year budget horizon widely regarded to be unfunded by at least £36bn and possibly considerably more (House of Commons Defence Committee, July 2011: 72). The review did not delete any discrete military capability, but both aircraft carrier and maritime patrol capabilities were withdrawn for several years, representing historically unprecedented capability gaps for the UK, and reinforcing the fear that the broad spectrum of capabilities was under threat (Interview 8, June 2016). In tandem, the risk to the sustainability of indigenous industry also threatened to undermine operational autonomy. As one senior British official remarks,

'without investment our national capacity atrophies and our ability to modify capabilities ourselves. The US will get you over a barrel and you'll have no alternative.' (Interview 5, March 2015).

Concern over the scale of military capacity was equally evident in France. As Foucault pointed out in a 2012 analysis, 'the choice between quality and quantity is becoming an urgent issue in the defense domain' (Foucault, 2012: 19) Like the UK, France was also suffering from unrealistic future commitments compared to likely costs, and the resulting impossibility of matching capabilities with defence policy goals for any longer than a few years after the publication of a major review.

Foucault concluded that France's 'Military Program Law', the cycle of planning for forthcoming defence spending, would be 'unable, or only barely able, to ensure a defence model that is credible and consistent with the 1994 or 2008 White Papers' (Foucault, 2012: 50).

In terms of the sustainment of a broad spectrum of capabilities, the lack of strategic airlift to support operations at distance and a second aircraft carrier to meet a requirement for continuous at-sea carrier-strike capability, was also of increasing concern to French officials (US Government Note, 2008). In 2008, in parallel with the launch of the French *Livre Blanc* on defence and security, France had made deep cuts to all three services (*BBC News*, 2008). And in July 2010, Defence Minister Hervé Morin announced a €3.5bn cut to the 2011-13 defence budget, reducing the equipment budget by €1.7bn over the period. While not as severe as British cuts, it still represented a significant row-back on previous plans made only two years previously (Brune et al, 2010: 6).

A senior NATO official argues that by this stage it was becoming increasingly clear that the US was lacking European partners with autonomous capabilities of sufficient breadth and scale,

'There was no European ally left that had a full spectrum war-fighting capability of its own. Post-2010, the UK had got rid of its maritime patrol aircraft and its carrier strike capability, at least for some time. Germany and France were in exactly the same position' (Interview 8, June 2016).

This concern over failing military credibility, and the resulting risk to strategies for the mitigation of entrapment, played a major role in prompting renewed discussions between the UK and France after the 2010 General Election in the UK. As one French official involved in talks with the UK recalls, 'The main driver was our shared perception that we were observing strategic shrinkage' (Interview 9, June 2016). A former RAF Air Chief Marshal and experienced senior industrialist argues that the need to retain the confidence of the US was at the heart of early discussions in 2008, 'As two leading military nations we had to do something to preserve US confidence in us. We constantly have to do things to preserve US confidence in us' (Interview 3,

April 2015). This view was echoed by a French official who observed at the time of the Lancaster House discussions that the need ‘to preserve sufficient capability to be credible partners of the United States’ was central to the logic of cooperation between the two states (Jones, 2010: 19).

The 2010 discussions over Franco-British cooperation built on the logic identified at the 2008 summit and a dialogue already opened between President Sarkozy and David Cameron’s Conservative party when in opposition, which had led to a strong personal relationship between the two leaders. There is little doubt that this personal rapport played a key role in making the Lancaster House treaties happen (Interview 1, September 2015). Unsurprisingly, however, as a senior aide to Prime Minister David Cameron remarks, ‘Finances were a dominant theme in Franco-British talks... They faced similar budgetary constraints and shared interests in pooling and sharing costs.’ (Interview 4, January 2015). Cameron and Sarkozy thus directed their defence ministries to look for bold new areas of cooperation to be underpinned by a new framework treaty on defence and security cooperation. Launching the treaties alongside President Sarkozy in November 2010, David Cameron set out publicly the rationale for the new accord,

‘[Cooperation] will also help us to maintain and strengthen our defences at a time when national finances are severely challenged... If we do all of these things, then we can expand our sovereign capability even at a time when resources are tight.’ (UK Government, 2010c)

### *Cooperation for efficiency – the Lancaster House treaties*

The ‘Lancaster House’ treaties build on significant pre-existing cooperation; France and the UK had already signed a Memorandum on Co-operative Defence Research and Technology, which was updated in 2000. Perhaps the most significant development prior to the Lancaster House treaties was the establishment of a Franco-British ‘High Level Group’ (HLG) by Prime Minister Tony Blair and President Jacques Chirac in 2006. Made up of both government and industry representatives, the High-Level Group was tasked with seeking potential areas of defence industrial cooperation, particularly around sensitive technologies. The 2010 Treaty on Defence

and Security Cooperation (TDSC) sets out a framework for cooperation by which greater efficiencies may be achieved. It provides a vocabulary for systematic cooperation across the entire process of capability development and deployment, from early discussion on 'concepts of operations' through to industrial cooperation, development and battlefield deployment. It covers the whole spectrum of capability development, providing for,

'the sharing and pooling of materials and equipment including through mutual interdependence, the building of joint facilities, mutual access to each other's defence markets, and industrial and technological co-operation' (UK Government, 2011a).

The core assumption of the TDSC is that such forms of cooperation will lead to greater efficiency, which will help sustain and even increase the availability of capabilities to the partners. First, through realising real cost-savings, and secondly through the provision of a scale of force on a combined basis that neither state could provide alone and which is sufficiently well-integrated to ensure that it will be 'greater than the sum of its parts'; thus, France and the UK set an open objective for relationships of 'mutual interdependence' for the generation and deployment of capabilities (UK Government, 2011a).

#### **iv. The logic of mutualisation: Franco-British *Lancaster House treaties* and the mutualisation of military capabilities**

The theory developed in this thesis is that structural-relational variables within an asymmetric alliance configuration shape the occurrence and form of capability mutualisation initiatives. It is argued that the two key effects of the asymmetric alliance configuration are the temporal durability of the alliance and the flexibility of policy that arises from the low politico-military interdependence within the alliance. It is further argued that the two key variables for the occurrence and form of capability mutualisation within the subordinate-subordinate relationship or 'local' alliance configuration are the extent of alignment of interests and capability requirements. From these theoretical assumptions, it has been hypothesised that there will be three



forms of capability mutualisation. First, at temporal distance from the frontline, due to the durability of the alliance; second, on the frontline where interests are perfectly aligned; and finally, at a functional distance from the frontline where alliance durability and policy flexibility allow for mutualisation of certain forms of military capability.

The preceding section has shown that as their military capabilities have struggled to meet their strategic ends, the UK and France have sought deeper cooperation, including aspects of mutual dependence, to gain greater efficiency in the use of finite resources. It has been argued that while Waltzian neorealism precludes such specialisation for security at the international level, the structural-relational configuration of an asymmetric alliance under unipolarity or bipolarity allows for such mutualisation. This opportunity for cooperation arises from the strong expectation of mutual support from the alliance, at least over the most existential negative interests of allies, and the future stability of the alliance based on an expectation that these shared interests are highly likely to remain aligned into the future. Such an expectation mitigates the risk that a mutualisation partner may in future become an adversary, and thus dilutes or dissolves relative gains and security competition over the technical superiority of military capabilities vis-à-vis allies is also negated. The expectation of future support, or at least absence of opposition for almost all likely concrete interests means that mutual dependence in the generation of military capabilities can be separated from their actual deployment. Partner states can be mutually dependent for the *generation* of particular capabilities but choose to *deploy* them at different times in different ways, thus preserving significant flexibility in their policies. Furthermore, this expectation of a durable alliance can also underpin flexible arrangements for mutual reliance and for mutualisation at functional distance from the frontline.

Evidence for the effects of the durability of the alliance can be seen in the long-term faith of the UK and France in the alignment of their most fundamental interests. This is of vital importance to the Lancaster House treaties, and as will be seen, to the concrete initiatives announced alongside. Since the 1995 Franco-British summit (Croft, 1996: 787), France and the UK, have recognised that cooperation is

underpinned by shared vital interests. This was reiterated as the basis for bilateral cooperation under the Lancaster House treaties,

‘[France and the UK] do not see situations arising in which the vital interests of either Party could be threatened without the vital interests of the other also being threatened’ (UK Government, 2011a).

This fundamental condition of alignment is also reflected in the responses of interviewees for this thesis. Asked why France and the UK were able to countenance the creation of mutual dependencies envisaged by the treaties, interviewees made comments such as, ‘It made sense’ (Interview 4, January 2015); ‘It makes obvious sense. Why would we not be cooperating with France?’ (Interview 5, March 2015); ‘It’s a strategic no-brainer’ (Interview 2, January 2015). Another argued,

‘Both UK and France have the same political and military aims, UN Security Council members, both have nuclear deterrents, they deploy armed forces and neither can afford to do so to the extent done in the past.’ (Interview 7, April 2015).

And, as a former senior adviser to Prime Minister David Cameron puts it,

‘Look around Europe - in both defence and foreign policy terms France is closest to the UK in terms of global outlook. They can still project power, they have global interests, use soft and hard power. We have similar sized armed forces. Frankly they are the only European partner we can do serious defence cooperation with across the board’ (Interview 5, January 2015).

In such comments the most striking thing is the sense of absence of any significant structural-relational barriers to closer defence cooperation, and this would suggest that the opportunities for efficiencies are highly significant.

Yet the other effect of the asymmetric alliance configuration is that of low politico-military interdependence between subordinate states. And this continues to constitute a significant barrier to mutualisation. By virtue of huge alliance asymmetry in the breadth and scale of American military capabilities, the US is critical to British

security in a way that French military capabilities cannot be; and the same applies for France vis-à-vis the US and the UK. The defection of France from alliance commitments to the UK need not necessitate the end of the US security guarantee for the UK. Thus, France and the UK are not bound by any great politico-military interdependence when it comes to choosing whether to support and how to contribute to American-led missions. As recent history shows, over Iraq in 2003 and Syria in 2013, they can find themselves on opposite sides over the case for supporting US action. They are also largely free to resource and pursue their own strategic ends and concrete interests as they choose. And, while they share a negative interest in NATO's mutual defence clause that might underpin mutualisation, actual military capabilities are rarely earmarked to any given concrete interest.

Thus, mutualisation of frontline capabilities, either for the pursuit of the struggle for influence over the US or for idiosyncratic interests remains very difficult, if not impossible. To take a fictional mutualisation initiative, if France were to provide aircraft carriers and the UK the aircraft to fly off them, they would gain potentially vast efficiencies. But such an arrangement would open each up to considerable entrapment and abandonment risks, significantly reducing freedom of action. As will be seen, however, between the possibility for mutualisation on the one hand, and the constraints of entrapment and abandonment on the other, much remains possible under the asymmetric alliance configuration, and it is to concrete initiatives that this chapter now turns.

### *The 'Lancaster House' cooperation initiatives*

While the general approach to future Franco-British defence cooperation was set out in the TDSC, several actual cooperation initiatives were announced alongside the treaty (UK Government, 2010a). The following section will consider a selection of these initiatives against the theoretical approach developed above. Some of these projects built on initiatives already outlined at the 2008 Franco-British summit, including aircraft carrier group interoperability and defence-industrial cooperation over missiles (UK Government, 2008). New initiatives, however, included a commitment to create a Combined Joint Expeditionary Force (CJEF) by 2016 and to

embark on a major defence aerospace research and feasibility study for a joint Franco-British drone or Uninhabited Aerial Vehicle (UAV), later named the Future Combat Air System (FCAS). New and deeper cooperation in the field of nuclear weapons was also set out in a stand-alone treaty providing a framework for cooperation on the safety and surety of nuclear warheads (UK Government, 2011b). As a former RAF Air Chief Marshal and experienced senior industrialist involved in the Franco-British High Level Group puts it,

‘When it came to putting real meat into a treaty the prospect of a joint rapid reaction force, a collaboration over nuclear testing and ultimately the industrialisation of combat air vehicles become obvious candidates.’ (Interview 3, April 2015)

This wide range of initiatives can be categorised into the three forms identified in previous chapters: specialisation, sharing and pooling. Thus, for example, the agreement to deepen cooperation in the field of the development and manufacture of missiles is an example of *specialisation* within industrial production. By giving up full autonomy over all aspects of the production of a particular missile, and with a view to expanding cooperation to other missiles, the two parties become reliant on each other for supply, thus creating an element of mutualisation. The agreement to *share* nuclear weapons research facilities by creating a joint facility for testing and surety of nuclear warheads is also a form of mutualisation. In this case both states are dependent on each other for an element of their nuclear weapons capability. By contrast, the Combined Joint Expeditionary Force is an example of the *pooling* of capabilities to create a larger force through cooperation and interoperability. While the latter is not an example of the mutualisation of capability, it may produce some economies of scale when capabilities are deployed under its framework. The remainder of this section will now go on to consider how the structural-relational variables of the asymmetric and local alliance configurations serve to constrain and enable the occurrence and particular form of concrete mutualisation initiatives.

#### *Mutualisation of industrial and support elements of military capability*

Regarding the defence industrial or supporting infrastructure of military capability, the following hypothesis has been drawn from the model:

H1: Aspects of capability mutualisation may be found at high temporal distance from the frontline, with or without a high alignment of concrete interests.

It has been argued that the position of subordinate states within an asymmetric alliance enables the possibility for efficiency through mutualisation; this possibility is, however, in tension with the low level of politico-military interdependence between those states. A logical way to avoid problems over the divergence of concrete interests is thus to take advantage of mutualisation at a temporal remove from the frontline deployment of the capability, namely in its industrial design and construction or through the mutualisation of non-frontline supporting elements. Such industrial cooperation already exists to a considerable degree. The UK, for example, has collaborated with other Western European partners for its principal fighter jets, the Panavia Tornado, and subsequently the Eurofighter Typhoon. The production of these aircraft has involved extensive specialisation among partner states in the manufacture and assembly of its component parts<sup>33</sup>. It is also the case, however, that there is a qualitative difference in the level of mutualisation intended in the Lancaster House era and previous defence industrial cooperation initiatives.

In general, European defence industrial projects have focussed on cooperation in the design and development of equipment by pooling resources for research and production. Although such projects may have *helped* to preserve industrial capacity, they did not necessarily *maintain the viability* of this capacity in themselves. In the past, there was thus not only a great temporal distance between industrial interdependence and operational autonomy, there was also a buffer in terms of existing national industrial breadth and capacity. In some cases, for example regarding Franco-British cooperation over the Puma, Lynx and Gazelle helicopters, research and development costs were pooled, but the industrial capacity for design, production and maintenance of military helicopters remained onshore in both states. It is also significant that, unlike the UK, France has never yet followed through on a bilateral or multilateral collaboration for its principal fighter jet. Thus, despite these

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<sup>33</sup> In this sense, there is a case to be made that much European defence industrial cooperation since the 1970s can be brought within the scope of the theory set out here; unfortunately there is not sufficient space to elaborate such an argument, and the thesis will focus on the Lancaster House initiatives.

projects, indigenous industrial capability remained significant in the UK and particularly so in France. By contrast, the Lancaster House treaties and accompanying industrial projects represent a significant shift in intention, both in terms of the temporal distance between industrial mutualisation and operational autonomy, but also in terms of creating mutual dependence in the sustainment of discrete areas of defence industrial capacity. There is thus, a useful distinction to be drawn between capability mutualisation within a project and the mutualisation of the elements of a defence industrial base necessary to produce that capability at all.

Under the terms of the TDSC and its parallel initiatives, in principle mutual dependence is accepted and expected by France and the UK, not just at the level of individual projects, but also within and across entire areas of the two states' respective industries, and, in the case of nuclear weapons, in supporting infrastructure and facilities. Mutualisation is thus accepted for future temporal periods (sometimes defined, sometimes indefinite) for the provision of some of the most sensitive capabilities and technologies that underpin operational autonomy. This is evident in three initiatives announced at the Lancaster House summit, and which will be considered in detail below. These are the Future Combat Air System (FCAS), the initiative on simulated nuclear weapons testing (UK Government, 2011b), and cooperation on complex weapons.

#### i. Future combat air system (FCAS)

In parallel with the signing of the TDSC, the UK and France agreed funding for an assessment phase for a joint future combat air system (FCAS), generally envisaged at the time as a 'drone' rather than a manned or 'inhabited' aircraft<sup>34</sup>. As outlined above, France and the UK have collaborated on aircraft in the past, although they have also failed twice to jointly produce their principal fast jets, first over the AFVG and then over the Eurofighter Typhoon. In the past, as Marc De Vore and Moritz Weiss have argued convincingly (2013), these projects have failed primarily for domestic reasons related to differences in French and British defence industrial relations between government and contractors. There is, however, arguably a more

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<sup>34</sup> At time of writing, an inhabited FCAS has not been ruled out.

intense imperative for cooperation on this occasion, which is the very survival of national defence aerospace sectors with the capacity to produce such aircraft. FCAS is thus driven by a need to preserve a defence industrial base in aerospace technology rather than simply to gain efficiencies from the production of a single aircraft. As such, it meets the strategic ends of both hedging and maintaining operational autonomy. As a former RAF Air Chief Marshal and experienced senior industrialist puts it,

‘It keeps the Europeans in the market. It preserves at a level very close to critical mass those specialist design and development skills that would otherwise disappear’ (Interview 3, April 2015).

Unlike France, the UK has opted to purchase the American F-35 ‘Joint Strike Fighter’ (JSF), and is a junior partner in its production. As such, looking towards the 2040s there is highly uncertain funding for indigenous British aerospace programmes beyond the manufacture of the Eurofighter Typhoon. As British defence analyst Malcolm Chalmers argues,

“We are losing the capability to build European aircraft. The next decision to come along will be the future generation combat aircraft. Will we piggyback on US [development] or work with France? If we don’t design, the capability will atrophy.” (Hollinger, 2015)

Neither, on current projections, is the French defence ministry likely to have anywhere near the level of resources necessary to embark on a new programme comparable in scale to the Rafael jet. As a former RAF Air Chief Marshal and experienced senior industrialist argues,

‘It’s not rocket science to say here we are in Europe with 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> generation fighters. In Europe, if there’s a market, we’ll compete Rafale, Typhoon, Gripen. Well, the JSF is going to occupy space for a lot longer than this generation so you

have to be in a position to jump that, and that's exactly the motivation for Anglo-French work on the UCAV<sup>35</sup>.' (Interview 3, April 2015)

Thus, without FCAS it will be extremely difficult for the UK and France to retain a depth of operational autonomy, as they see it, in the autonomous delivery of air power. Unless they were to make substantial financial commitments to sustain their aerospace industries on a national basis, they would both likely become completely dependent on the US for their air defence and strike capabilities in the long-term.

While both the UK and France are thus committed to working together to maintain their defence aerospace sectors, it is less clear whether FCAS will deliver efficiency in terms of unit-costs. There is a large literature on whether collaborative aerospace programmes do deliver savings at a unit-cost level and the question is highly complex (Hartley, 2005; Quinlan, 2001). Collaboration at this level is less motivated by efficiency for direct cost savings than the viability of any kind of national programme at all. In this sense, 'efficiency' is derived from the aggregation of funding and generation. As Michael Quinlan argued,

'even where a project undertaken collaboratively will cost 3X whereas the uncomplicated national route would cost only 2X, if each of the countries can afford no more than X, collaboration may still be the only realistic way of making the project possible' (Quinlan, 2001:11).

Keith Hartley makes the same point, noting that 'on average UK cost share is about one-third of total development costs' (Hartley, 2005). And a former RAF Air Chief Marshal and experienced senior industrialist argues that this is the case regarding the Eurofighter Typhoon, 'We wouldn't have produced an aeroplane like that any other way than with the nations we collaborated with' (Interview 3, April 2015). In terms of mutual dependence, FCAS is a bigger step for France than for the UK, which has for many years collaborated with European states and the US for its main fighter jets and thus has already embraced mutualisation or, in the case of the F35, a condition closer to dependence.

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<sup>35</sup> UCAV stands for 'Unmanned Combat Aerial Vehicle'.



The FCAS programme is currently at the early stages of development. If it proceeds it will involve elements of both specialisation and the sharing of very sensitive technologies. It may be that when it enters service the temporal distance between industrial mutual dependence and operational deployment remains high, as with previous aircraft collaboration. It is not yet clear the extent to which there will be mutualisation in future support services to the aircraft such as training and maintenance, although it would seem highly likely in the context of the TDSC. In industrial terms this would mean specialisation in aspects of production, and operationally through the rationalisation of support services for the aircraft through further specialisation and sharing. This would of course further reduce the temporal distance between industrial interdependence and operational autonomy and create further mutual dependence, but it remains a plausible option.

## ii. Nuclear weapons testing – shared infrastructure

Franco-British cooperation on nuclear weapons is not entirely new (Croft, 1996); serious discussions can be traced back to the late 1980s when there were talks over British procurement of a French stand-off nuclear-armed missile, although the UK ultimately decided not to have this capability at all (Croft, 777). This was followed by the setting up of a Joint Commission on Nuclear Policy and Doctrine in 1993 (Croft, 1996: 779). Cooperation had thus been on the agenda for many years but had never translated into work on actual capability. This changed during the Lancaster House negotiations, which produced a separate treaty on nuclear weapons testing (UK Government, 2011b). The agreement to share facilities in both the UK and France for hydrographic testing will provide very large efficiency savings for the partners, apparently extending into the ‘hundreds of millions’ of pounds (Tertrais, 2012: 15). By ending duplication, cooperation might be expected to reduce by around half the costs involved in the operation of the testing facilities as fully autonomous national entities. Efficiency is the driving force, as made clear in the previous section. As Matthew Harries remarks, it results from ‘acute financial pressures, symptomatic of severe structural deficiencies’ (Harries, 2012: 15).

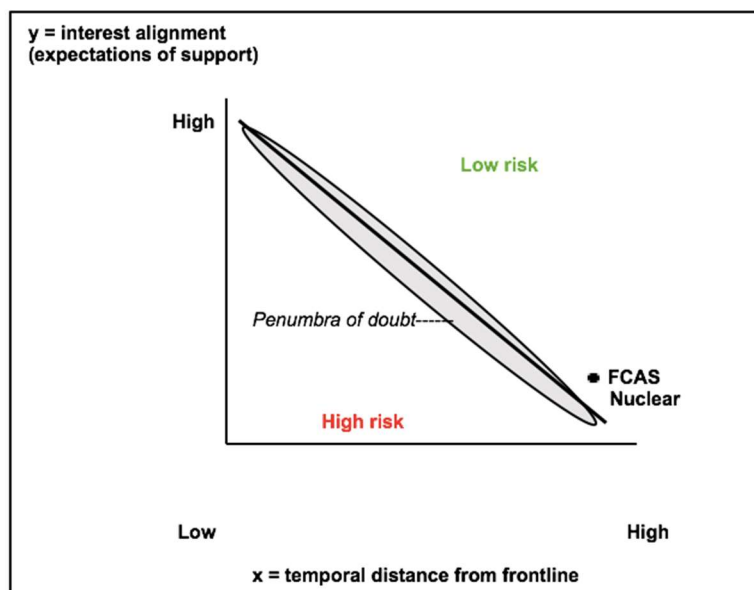
Due to the highly sensitive nature of the project, there is a limit to the amount of publicly-available information. What is perhaps most striking about this deep

cooperation on nuclear weapons is the extent to which, though far more so for France than the UK, the capability has in the past been regarded as requiring very high levels of sovereign control. As late as 2001, Michael Quinlan, the British MOD official responsible for nuclear deterrence policy saw little prospect for Franco-British nuclear cooperation (Harries, 2012: 15). Whereas the UK has long had a certain asymmetric dependence on the US for its nuclear weapons capability, in that its Trident missiles are American-made and drawn from a pool maintained in the US, such a significant form of external dependence is a new development for France's '*force de frappe*', and therefore represents a dependence, albeit mutual.

This mutualisation of elements of nuclear weapons capability draws on the notion of alliance durability assumed by the model. There is a considerable temporal distance between mutualisation through shared testing facilities and frontline operational autonomy. Given that both states are signatories to the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty and share an interest in reducing the risks of nuclear terrorism, the initiative involves 'relatively uncontroversial' tasks of managing warhead stockpiles (Harries, 2012: 17). The treaty is also quite specific in its temporal dimension, containing a ten-year notice period for abrogation (UK Government, 2011b: Article 18). The temporal aspect of the initiative underlines the confidence that the parties have in each other over a durable period. Furthermore, there is a clear and pronounced symmetry in the mutual dependence entailed in the sharing of a facility; both sides would harm each other equally were they to pull out of the cooperative arrangements. From among the initiatives undertaken at Lancaster House, a former British MOD official cites nuclear weapons cooperation as the strongest example of the creation of a mutual dependence (Interview 1, September 2015).

In both cases considered above, the structural-relational configuration provides for the mutualisation of capabilities without great risk of any conflict of interest or entrapment/abandonment dilemma. The shared strategic ends of hedging against abandonment and the need to maintain high levels of operational autonomy are clearly important here. More particularly, the way in which France and the UK seek to meet those strategic ends in terms of capabilities is very similar in a material sense. While the asymmetric alliance configuration provides for the possibility of mutualisation of those elements of capabilities at significant temporal distance from

the frontline, the alignment of the shared strategic ends of operational autonomy and hedging against an uncertain future are also crucial. In this sense, the Lancaster House treaties provide an attempt to hedge against US abandonment in that they contain an element of what one senior British official involved in the talks regards as 'reinsurance' (Interview 5, March 2015). Overall, however, this form of mutualisation at a distance from the frontline can be regarded as fairly low risk, as is demonstrated in figure 4.5. There is little chance of the creation of entrapment/abandonment dilemmas between the partners.



**Figure 4.5. FCAS temporal distance from frontline**

### iii. Complex weapons cooperation

The UK and France are by far the highest spenders on complex weapons (or missiles) among European states. It is an expensive and high-tech field and the continued viability of such an industry in the UK and France has been under pressure for some time. As such, the consolidation of the European missile industry began during the late 1990s under Franco-British agreement. The pan-European company MBDA was created through a wave of mergers of the complex weapons divisions of three companies, the Franco-German EADS, the British BAE Systems and the Italian Finmeccanica. Although MBDA can share certain costs across the products it produces for different European armed forces, it has remained to a large degree organised around the production of different missiles for different national

customers. And, where there has been cooperation on missiles, the most sensitive areas of production have remained duplicated across national silos. This national focus is in part an historical inheritance from the constituent national companies. It has also, however, been driven by the company's parent states to retain certain technologies indigenously, and thus maintain autonomy in the production and use of missiles.

The financial cost of retaining autonomous technological capability is high, however, and across the major European states there is duplication of cost and effort in the most expensive areas of the manufacture of missiles for different national armed forces. Industry sources say that rationalisation has become necessary to preserve the entire sector itself, and that this requires a trade-off in terms of addressing issues of mutual dependence. One industry source argues that,

'It's about being pragmatic around freedom of action, sovereign advantage and industrial sovereignty, essentially because of cost'. (Interview 6, April 2015).

Thus, the driving factor behind cooperation, as explored above, is the affordability of high-tech military capability. Even before the Lancaster House treaties were signed there was, however, a shift towards greater interdependence within MBDA. As one industry source explains, 'some of the cooperative programmes that were pre-Lancaster House, provided the political confidence that we could do more business in this area' (Interview 6, April 2015). Complex weapons cooperation was singled out by the UK and France for higher political support as part of the Lancaster House treaties, in large part because of its strategic importance as an industry that requires operational autonomy and high levels of sovereign technological content. It was also to be considered something of a test case for wider industrial cooperation. The Lancaster House treaties thus provided political backing for deeper mutual dependence within the company and a move towards a 'One MBDA' approach. This was driven by the concept of national 'Centres of Excellence', which is a move towards national specialisation in elements of missile production. As one industry source says,

‘The idea of Centres of Excellence under Lancaster House is to look beyond the missiles themselves and towards how the industry is organised. That’s a real next step because what we’re saying is ‘if you want to make real savings, they can be done if you become co-dependent on the other party’ (Interview 6, April 2015).

This has the benefit of greater efficiency by creating ‘an industrial jigsaw that’s less duplicated in both countries’ (Interview 6, April 2015). It also raises, however, the matter of security of supply, which is a prerequisite for retention of full operational autonomy and means that ‘you need absolute political confidence that those arrangements will be honoured no matter what’ (Interview 6, April 2015). As the model set out above explains, the necessity for political confidence is met by the temporal confidence of the UK and France in the durability of the alliance. As an industry source says,

‘The reality is we’re all singing off the same western geo-political hymn sheet. That’s why there’s the confidence to do this’ (Interview 6, April 2015).

This reflects the possibility of efficiency in an asymmetric alliance configuration as explored in the discussion above. Complex weapons cooperation goes deeper than FCAS, however, because of bilateral agreement to a ‘process of specialisation within ‘centres of excellence’ freed from national constraints’ (Bouvier, 2014: 48). Henri Shricke, the former French Defence Attaché to the UK describes this as, ‘the start of managed inter-dependence for missile sub-systems’ (2014: 41). There is therefore mutualisation at temporal distance from the frontline.

And yet, in this example, the temporal distance between industrial interdependence and frontline use, while variable, can also potentially be very short. Although the UK and France both retain autonomous ‘war stocks’ of missiles, it is not implausible that a conflict could exhaust these supplies, and that industrial mutualisation could become directly relevant to an on-going operation. As one industry figure argues,

‘The biggest challenge is how to gain confidence around security of supply and balance between the partners’ (Interview 7, April 2015).

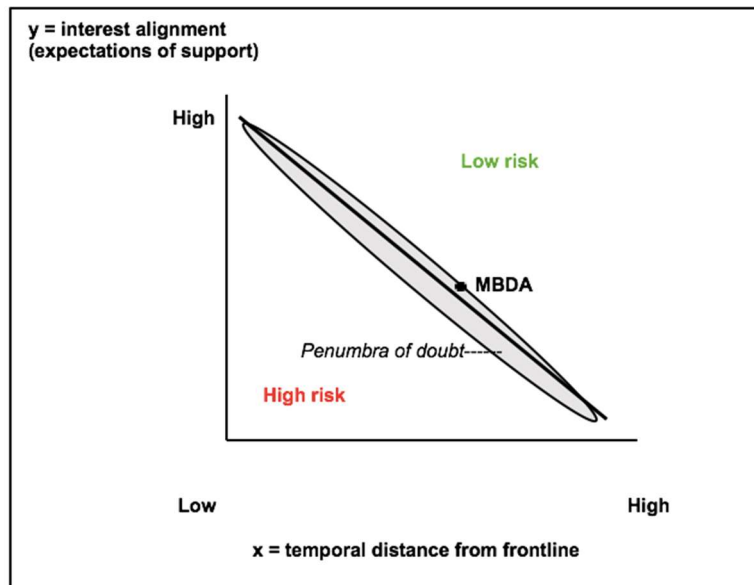
If both countries are involved in the same operation, or only one is involved but without controversy, then there is no issue. There is, however, the possibility that one would have to support the other over a mission that the other opposed. That the UK and France could enter such an arrangement suggests that even as regards their potential concrete interests, either in supporting the US or acting alone, the two states believe that the likelihood of a serious conflict of interests is very slim. As such, this form of industrial mutualisation does not endanger the flexibility of the other's policy, including their own continued ability to launch autonomous operations.

On the other hand, there remains a risk of entrapment, at least into political embarrassment. Take, for example, a situation analogous to Iraq in 2003. If the UK needed a continuous supply of missiles and relied on components made in France, there might be a risk of entrapment for France into the political embarrassment of indirectly supporting an operation it opposed. Any abandonment of the UK, however, would not only contravene sensitive security of supply agreements, it would also produce equally dangerous harm to French interests. As one industry source argues, if either state were to withdraw production of an element of a joint missile,

'They would damage themselves equally by fundamentally challenging the nature of surety of supply, which would have fundamental impacts on even broader relations outside of defence. That's why it's unlikely' (Interview 6, April 2015).

Thus, the dilemma of entrapment and abandonment, while present to a degree in this example, is lessened by two factors. First, the likelihood of shared or at least non-conflicting interests, and secondly, the depth and high symmetry of dependence in the cooperation itself. It should also be said, however, that even within this form of cooperation, both the UK and France are hedging to a degree by retaining autonomous expertise, even if reduced in capacity, across the most sensitive areas of missile production (Pannier, 2016: 344). This would provide the ability to reconstitute capabilities more easily than beginning from nothing, but it would still be a very expensive and time-consuming process. The apparent paradox in this situation is that in seeking to maintain operational autonomy in a particular capability, the UK and France have both, to a degree, given it up in favour of mutualisation. But, for the reasons given above, there is not a great risk of a contradiction between

mutualisation and operational autonomy because of the durability of their alliance and a general expectation of alignment, or at least not serious divergence, over any concrete interest. The level of risk involved in mutualisation of missile production can be expressed in figure 4.6 below.



**Figure 4.6. Missile cooperation distance from frontline**

Across these case studies, however, there are important unit-level differences between the UK and France regarding their respective defence industries and thus the potential for mutualisation. Several interviewees point to differences that reflect the contrast between the higher French demands for autonomy and the contrast between French *dirigisme* and British free-market competition. As a former RAF Air Chief Marshal and experienced senior industrialist involved in the High Level Group says,

‘In terms of the internal views of the state, you probably couldn’t have picked a more difficult set of circumstances; given the way in which the French regard their defence industry as a strategic national resource, given the alignment that they achieve between requirements of national government on one hand and the requirement of industry on the other, given that there is a unified view of essentially what is good for France. And then trying to align that with our free-wheeling, free-market approach in

the UK, which is globalised, that was a significant challenge.’ (Interview 3, April 2015).

While these unit-level differences are indeed significant, interviewees in both the UK and France argue that the UK still takes a sufficiently strong line on the retention of indigenous defence industrial capabilities to make an alignment with France possible. As one British official remarks, ‘We also have limits as to how far we want to mortgage industry to the US.’ (Interview 2, January 2015). Indeed, it could be argued that the fact that mutualisation is pushed for at the political level, despite a strong awareness of very different approaches to defence industry, underlines the importance of the strategic ends of hedging and autonomous action. As long as the UK and France have sufficiently similar views on the technologies and capabilities they want to retain as an indigenous requirement, then the alignment of these strategic ends is possible.

Aside from the expectations drawn from structural-relational variables, however, there is always the chance that the UK, or perhaps even France, may choose to solve their means-ends dilemmas not through mutualisation of industrial capacity but by compromising on their autonomy and risking the future without hedging, perhaps by looking to the US for the supply of capabilities previously deemed to be sovereign requirements. The parties are thus vulnerable to abandonment in the sense that one state may interpret its strategic end of operational autonomy and hedging against abandonment in a different way. As one industry source argues in relation to cooperation over missiles,

‘Because of the funding driver there is a risk that you will be tipped towards ‘off the shelf’ acquisition. Will the UK go to France or to the US if it becomes too expensive? France seems less likely to do so because it is more *dirigiste*.’ (Interview 7, April 2015).

Under these circumstances one partner, most likely France given its attitudes to operational autonomy, would need to regenerate its indigenous capability, which is not impossible but is expensive and time-consuming, and there is a risk that technical expertise will have been completely lost. Thus, the foregoing analysis



suggests that there will remain a tension between unit-level factors and systemic effects.

### *Mutualisation of capabilities on the frontline*

Turning to the mutualisation of capabilities at the 'frontline' or operational level, it is possible to draw from the model the following hypothesis:

H2: Capability mutualisation may be found at zero temporal-spatial distance from the frontline where there is a very high certainty of support for concrete interests.

#### i. The Combined Joint Expeditionary Force (CJEF)

The Combined Joint Expeditionary Force (CJEF) is a high-profile initiative announced alongside the TDSC. While it will be seen that it falls short of the definition of mutualisation, it is considered here at some length because the way it does so provides a useful perspective on the inherent difficulties in the mutualisation of capabilities at the operational level. The Lancaster House treaties and associated initiatives do not provide examples of operational mutualisation in the form of shared or specialised capabilities. Why is this the case? The strategic end of the struggle for influence identified above requires that France and the UK provide military support to the US as quickly and across as great a range of capabilities as possible to demonstrate relevance and commitment. The strategic end of operational autonomy for their own idiosyncratic or positive interests implies the same. Where concrete interests diverge, however, mutualisation risks creating entrapment and abandonment dilemmas and constraining the flexibility required to meet strategic ends. On the other hand, given that many concrete interests under strategic ends are still *likely* to be *often* more or less aligned between subordinate states, it may be possible to use the pooling of forces, enabled by enhanced interoperability and training, to find solutions to the problems of efficiency and scale, while falling short of operational capability mutualisation.

In principle, mutualisation through specialisation and sharing will produce significant cost savings. Neither France nor the UK, however, can guarantee that they will

*a/ways* identify the same concrete interest in supporting US operations on *exactly* the same timetable, to a similar degree, or even at all, nor that they would be able to support each other over their autonomous concrete interests. In the decade between the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003 and the threat of US action against Syria in 2013, the UK and France found themselves on opposite sides of American interests. Unit-level factors, including different arrangements for the authorisation of the use of military force, as well as domestic shifts in opinion on military intervention, also make immediate alignment very difficult if not impossible. Even if both are committed to act alongside the US as closely and as often as they can, it may not be possible in every case. For this reason, as well as to preserve the ability to act on their own idiosyncratic interests the UK and France still seek to maintain autonomous operational capabilities, unencumbered by the risk of entrapment or abandonment. The ability to deploy a highly interoperable, jointly commanded, combined force could therefore provide a solution to the problem of how to increase their scale of contribution to US-led missions or shared concrete interests. Capability mutualisation would be minimal or absent but the efficiencies gained through joint deployment could help to meet some of the means-ends challenges identified above. Such an approach has similarities with the notion of the CSDP as a means to concert power for influence that was discussed in chapter two.

The Franco-British CJEF is not a standing force but is available 'at notice' for use in support of UN, EU and NATO operations, as well as bilaterally. It provides for a combined Franco-British force of air, land and sea components, comprising the rapid-reaction elements of both armed forces. It can be scaled up from relatively small non-combat tasks through to high-intensity war-fighting, and has been available for operations from 2016. As a military force, the extent to which CJEF is a new concept is viewed differently by practitioners. One interviewee argued that it builds on the established concept of joint forces such as the Allied Rapid Reaction Corps and the NATO Response Force, within which the French and British have worked closely in the past on the air component,

'In terms of a joint force, there is nothing really new other than it is bilateral, which is axiomatic because the UK and France are the only two European nations who could

deploy at brigade-level plus with their own logistics and with command and control, and that's been the case for a very long time' (Interview 3, April 2015).

Others argue, however, that the CJEF does represent a departure of some kind, precisely because it operates bi-nationally 'as one set of armed forces' in a way that has not been done before (Interview 2, January 2015). Another difference is that the CJEF may need to work outside, as well as within, NATO command structures, and therefore without an American presence. The absence of a single dominant partner from the force, a role usually played either by the US, UK or France, leads to an unusual, highly symmetrical relationship of equals.

Given that the CJEF is based neither on capability specialisation nor on the sharing of assets, it is unlikely to reduce direct financial costs significantly in the short-term. In the longer-term, if and when industrial mutualisation is present across a number of capabilities, then it may lead to efficiencies. The CJEF is, however, driven by the European crisis in the affordability of military capability, particularly as regards the viability of forces at scale, in terms of both overall deployable force and more specifically on the 'enabling capabilities' available to France and the UK, such as air-to-air refuelling, sea and air transportation, command and control and surveillance and target acquisition. Both the 2010 UK SDSR and the 2008 French *Livre Blanc* reduced the scale of deployable expeditionary forces, in the case of the UK by as much as a third (UK Government, 2010b)<sup>36</sup>. Since the First Gulf War, the UK had aimed to be able to offer a division-scale force to a major operation, but this was less realistic following the 2010 SDSR. Without scale in forces and supporting strategic enablers, the UK and France have far less to offer the US, or indeed to act autonomously of the US if necessary.

Thus, the CJEF offers a way to mitigate this loss of scale. According to one senior official involved in the Lancaster House negotiations it can be seen as part of the wider efficiency agenda, 'it reflects a clear intention to get more bang for our buck, it's collaboration across the board: use the same equipment and do programmes together' (Interview 1, September 2015 ). And, as British General Simon Mayall has

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<sup>36</sup> The 2015 SDSR claims that the UK can field a division of three brigades and a total of 50,000 armed forces personnel (UK Government, 2015).

remarked, 'The capacity of the British armed forces to deploy a full division nowadays is going to be under strain because of resources' (House of Lords, 2011). For Mayall, cooperating with France by 'pooling' critical capabilities could thus lead to a multiplication effect, larger than the sum of the parts of both states,

'Our connection technically with the French may also allow us to put a larger joint contribution into a force. Things like airlift, sealift, unmanned aerial vehicles; there is a range of joint enablers absolutely critical to the capacity to conduct these very complex operations nowadays that each individual nation can only afford so many of them. So, there are areas not so much being interdependent but just saying, "If we pool them"; it does not stop us operating independently at this level but by pooling them we can jointly operate at a much higher level' (House of Lords, 2011).

The CJEF thus provides some answers to the challenges of the Franco-British means-ends crisis identified above. It provides for a means of addressing concerns over influencing the US as well as meeting interests where the US may not be involved.

On the one hand, therefore, the CJEF is an attempt at reinforcing both French and British strategies towards the US, continuing to emphasise the mitigation of entrapment risks through the political influence brought by the offer of military capability. The CJEF could, in principle, provide a larger scale contribution to an operation than either country could provide nationally, and which may, as Mayall has suggested, be greater than the sum of its parts. And given that the CJEF can operate outside NATO and EU structures, it could support US operations quickly without the need for multinational agreement or for wider consultation with allies. CJEF thus potentially provides the flexibility to act rapidly alongside the US, which remains the premier concern, certainly for the UK and increasingly so for France.

On the other hand, the Lancaster House treaties also occurred against a backdrop of concerns over US disengagement from Europe. In 2010, the notion of a 'division of labour' between the US and Europe was raised, with the UK and France taking more responsibility for their wider neighbourhood while the US would focus on Asia-Pacific (Interview 2, January 2015). In relation to this partial abandonment risk, the CJEF

provides options for the UK and France. Because it is intended to be operationally autonomous, it could provide for a contribution to a NATO mission in which the US played a more reserved role, such as that in Libya in 2011. In terms of EU action, while the CJEF and Franco-British cooperation more broadly has been viewed as a reproach to the failures of the EU CSDP, it does not undermine the possibility of EU military action (Jones, 2010). While there was widespread disappointment in both London and Paris at the lack of progress from the St Malo agenda, the CJEF could provide the military core of a CSDP mission<sup>37</sup>. In terms of bilateral action, the UK and France could deploy CJEF in the wider European neighbourhood and Africa, and would not need to rely on their EU partners.

As with capability mutualisation at the industrial level, the CJEF is enabled by the asymmetric alliance configuration to the extent that such cooperation assumes an absence of balancing and relative gains concerns with the partner. Because the logic is one of interoperability rather than mutualisation, however, the CJEF can in principle support all strategic ends without compromising flexibility of policy and risking entrapment or abandonment. The challenge for the CJEF, however, is whether, given the absence of mutualisation, it will ever be used for any significant operations. With no capability interdependencies built into the force, neither partner can be dragged along with the other by necessity. Officials and senior military figures in both the UK and France do insist, however, that it is highly likely that it will be used (Interview 10, September 2015). On the other hand, if it is not used then it will lose its credibility. There is, thus, a kind of reputational risk built into the CJEF; it must be used if it is to be taken seriously, particularly by the US. The second major drawback of the CJEF is that because it is not based on sharing or specialising it cannot deliver major cost savings and thus will be of limited benefit to maintaining national capabilities.

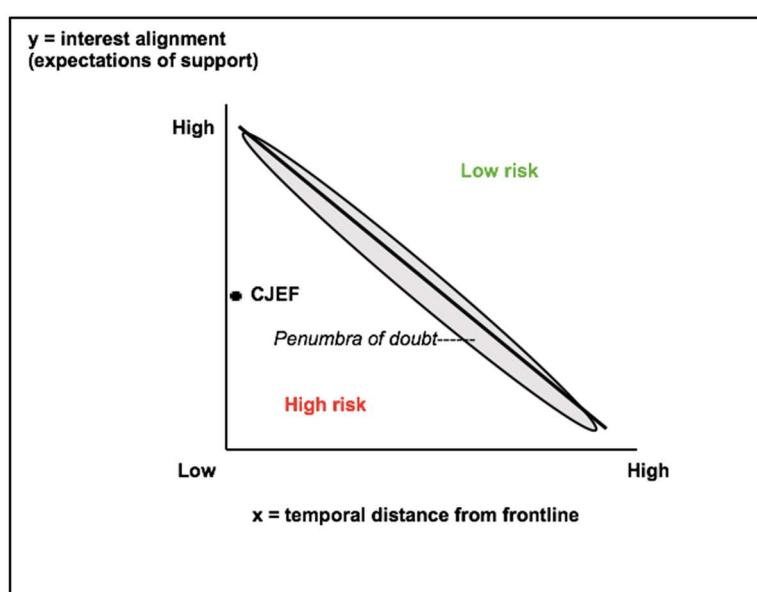
The Lancaster House treaties thus avoided any moves towards mutualisation of frontline capabilities. As a senior French official involved in negotiations for the Lancaster House treaties notes,

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<sup>37</sup> Assuming, given the 2016 British decision by referendum to leave the EU, that the UK and EU find arrangements to include the UK in CSDP missions.

‘That will not change overnight because it very much touches on sovereignty. British and French assets will come together effectively. That we can see. But if you really want to stop strategic shrinkage we will have to take things further, which we’re not prepared to do, probably for political reasons, but it’s better than nothing. It’s as far as it gets for the time being.’ (Interview 9, June 2016).

As can be seen from figure 4.7, mutualisation of a frontline force without high expectations of shared interests would be a considerable risk and almost certainly raise issues of entrapment and abandonment. Thus, the frontline mutualisation of capabilities remains unlikely for the UK and France.



**Figure 4.7. CJEF distance from frontline**

H3: Capability mutualisation may be found at functional distance from the frontline, with or without high certainty of support for concrete interests.

‘Mutual reliance’: *ad hoc* operational interdependence

As has been seen, the Lancaster House negotiations did not produce arrangements for the mutualisation of operational capabilities. And yet there are examples whereby *ad hoc* operational mutual dependence, termed by officials as ‘mutual reliance’, has been established. Here, one partner supports the operations of the other by

providing a particular capability, which the other state is lacking. Thus, for example, following the Lancaster House treaties, the UK provided strategic air-lift assistance to France for *Operation Serval* in Mali in January 2013 in the form of C17 aircraft, a capability of which France has a shortfall; the UK also provided some reconnaissance assets to the French mission (Interview 1, September 2015; Interview 8, June 2016). As a senior NATO official remarks,

‘France relied heavily on the UK for ISR support. They were genuinely doing the heavy-lifting on the ground, and hats off to them for that, but it was enabled by other allies. I think they would have got on their own eventually, but would it have taken longer to get there? Yes. It would be far more of a struggle and less well-informed, and therefore the planning is different. And it would mean a greater cost in terms of time, resources and blood. No European ally can do anything but the smallest thing alone’ (Interview 8, June 2016).

Likewise, since 2010 the UK has been without maritime patrol aircraft and has relied to a degree on French capability to support these operations (Telegraph, November 2015). As one British official familiar with the offer of British support to France in Mali puts it,

‘The needs are neatly complimentary, France needs strategic transport help. On the other hand it has better tactical air transport. And France still has maritime patrol aircraft, which is part of the UK mitigation of capability gaps through allies’ (Interview 2, January 2015).

Such cooperation reflects mutual reliance in the form of a general commitment to assist where the other has capability gaps, and is based on a reasonable level of expectation of assistance. It provides an *ad hoc* and *de facto* specialisation of capabilities. These capabilities tend, however, to be of a certain *functional* kind such as air-lift and reconnaissance and not ‘frontline’ troops or combat aircraft. As such there is a functional distance from frontline operational autonomy. This reduces the risk involved for the party contributing the assets, and means that support can be provided without high-profile domestic political decisions being necessary. This form of cooperation does not fit comfortably as either one of mutual dependence or

aggregation through interoperability. It is perhaps best described as *ad hoc* operational mutual dependence enabled by functional distance from the frontline. As with the other forms of mutual dependence, however, such cooperation is underpinned by the durability of the alliance and general expectations of future *quid pro quo* arrangements. Such agreements are, however, short-term, case-specific and perhaps not sufficiently robust for either state to be able to plan definitively on such support for all contingencies.

### *Conclusion*

This chapter has demonstrated that the UK and France largely pursue the strategic ends assumed by the asymmetric alliance configuration, but as the two most significant military powers in European NATO, both value a high level of autonomy, which includes an indigenous defence industrial capacity. Indeed, the preceding section has shown that capability mutualisation between France and the UK occurs almost exclusively at temporal distance from the frontline. This builds on longstanding cooperation in the defence industrial field. But the 2010 Lancaster House treaties also represent a significant shift to the mutualisation of capabilities. In the highly sensitive field of nuclear deterrence, France and the UK have mutualised crucial elements of their capability, and are now bound together for the sustainment of their role as nuclear powers, at minimum for a decade, but probably for far longer. The FCAS programme has been pursued on the basis that neither France nor the UK can afford to maintain indigenous defence aerospace industries sufficient to produce their principal fighter jets.

Given the UK's already extant dependencies in the field of nuclear weapons (the US) and defence aerospace (Europe), this is perhaps a more momentous move for France than the UK. And indeed, in terms of *ad hoc* variables outside of the theoretical framework, there are noted differences, whether for domestic cultural or economic reasons, between the French attachment to indigenous capability and the more relaxed British attitude to dependence on the US. Some interviewees speculated that these different views may threaten such cooperation in future. For now, however, there is sufficient alignment over the requirement for indigenous industry across a similar field of capabilities.



Regarding the frontline or 'functional distance' mutualisation of capabilities, there are no strong examples between the UK and France. In terms of frontline mutualisation, the theoretical approach suggests that concrete interests must be very tightly aligned. As seen in the section on the logic of behaviour, France and the UK invest very heavily in their credibility with the US. Yet at the same time, and in line with the theory developed in this thesis, in recent years they have found themselves on opposing sides of the argument over support for American operations. Furthermore, they retain some important idiosyncratic interests with, for example, the UK's need to defend the Falkland Islands, and the French requirement to deploy significant forces autonomously, for example in North Africa. The CJEF, however, demonstrates how both states seek a flexible way around this problem of different interests, because, as the theory suggests, though their concrete interests are not guaranteed to be in alignment, they often will be.

Finally, as noted above, an *ad hoc* mutual dependence or 'mutual reliance' has been established between the UK and France, and the capabilities that each offers the other tend to fall into the functional category, i.e., in such areas as strategic airlift and maritime patrol. Yet, for now at least, neither state is prepared, or ready, to formally mutualise capabilities or elements them at functional distance from the frontline. This would be a major step for two states that still seek to deploy significant forces with a high degree of autonomy. It should be noted, however, that while it has not yet happened, if the very existence of capabilities is threatened then even the UK and France may embrace mutualisation at functional distance. The next case study demonstrates that such arrangements are possible between European states.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **BELGIUM AND THE NETHERLANDS: THE BENELUX DECLARATION 2005-2012**

#### **i. Introduction**

By contrast with the previous case study, Belgium and the Netherlands are two of the smaller European NATO member states. They do not have a long history of fielding large armed forces with a broad spectrum of capabilities drawn from indigenous defence industrial resources, nor of playing pivotal roles in grand alliances. Before the Second World War, when both states pursued policies of neutrality from the great power alliances, their relations were often difficult (Kossmann, 1978; Wels, 1982; Mallinson, 2010). In the aftermath of the war, however, they quickly found common interests within the new transatlantic security architecture of NATO. Discussions over defence cooperation began as early as the mid-1940s, and in the following decades cooperative initiatives grew ever-more developed in depth and breadth, particularly between the two navies.

As such, today Belgium and the Netherlands have perhaps the most advanced and closest defence cooperation relationship of all European states. The challenges of flat-in-real-terms defence budgets and the growing cost of sustaining military capabilities have become more acute in the post-Cold War period, serving as a further incentive for the two states to agree ever-deeper defence cooperation initiatives. The 2008 financial crisis dealt a further blow to their already fragile force structures. As will be shown, and as with the previous chapter, the 2012 Benelux Declaration can be viewed as a response to both long-term trends in the affordability of military capability and a more immediate crisis in funding. Thus, Belgium and the Netherlands have sought to build on an already deep relationship to find further efficiencies from defence cooperation.

The chapter will use the framework of the asymmetric alliance configuration to first provide an assessment of the strategic ends of the Netherlands and Belgium and the role of their military capabilities in meeting these ends. It will then consider the means-ends crises of both states, which came to a head in the aftermath of the 2008

financial crisis. The final section will then use the model of capability mutualisation to demonstrate how structural-relational variables provide the constraints and opportunities that shape the form of capability mutualisation initiatives. To do this, the final section of the chapter will focus on concrete cases selected from capability initiatives announced as part of the 2012 Benelux Declaration and the crucial shift in the depth of naval cooperation that began in 2005. While this element of cooperation occurred prior to, and is therefore not linked to the 2008 financial crisis, it will be argued that it still reflects the same, and broadly contemporary, challenges around the affordability of military capability.

## **ii. The logic of behaviour: the strategic ends of Belgium and the Netherlands under an asymmetric alliance**

### *Before NATO – the politics of neutrality*

The modern state of Belgium was created following a nationalist uprising in the southern provinces of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in 1830. The great powers of Europe formally recognised the new state in 1831, though it was not until the 1839 London Conference that the Netherlands recognised Belgian independence. The 1839 Treaty of London also declared that Belgium would be ‘an independent and perpetually neutral State’ (London Treaty, 1849). Neutrality served Belgian security well for over seventy years until the increasingly precarious European balance fell apart. The German invasion in 1914 violated Belgium’s neutral status, providing the UK with its *casus belli* for entry into the war. For Belgium, the invasion was ‘proof of the inadequacy of neutrality’ and led to the search for an alternative policy (Kossmann, 1978: 574). At the Versailles Conference in 1919 Belgian diplomats successfully argued for the removal of the constitutional requirement for neutrality (Wels, 1982: 76). Between the wars Belgium sought security guarantees from the UK, France and the Netherlands. The UK refused, preferring that Belgium retain a policy of neutrality, while the Netherlands chose to maintain its own ‘aloofness’, having avoided Belgium’s fate in the First World War (1978: 576-580).

While for a period Belgium became closely allied to France, the heavily asymmetrical nature of the relationship meant that it was difficult for Brussels to make its voice

heard. Alignment with France also caused great internal friction in Belgium, particularly among nationalistic groups in the Dutch-speaking population of Flanders (Stein, 1990: 3). By the 1930s, this tentative alliance had also broken down and Belgium returned to the position of a neutral in the international system (Rothstein, 1968: 65). In 1940 its armed forces were once again overwhelmed and the country fell under German occupation for a second time. The lesson that neutrality could not guarantee Belgian security was thus made twice in less than thirty years, and with devastating force. It is perhaps unsurprising then that Belgium emerged from the Second World War as an interested and willing partner in a post-war security settlement for Western Europe.

The Netherlands is an older and once far stronger power. Its rise through the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century was based on its proximity to global sea trading routes and to commercial relationships with other European states. The Netherlands came to occupy a distinctive position as 'an important European maritime power, uninterested in territorial expansion in Europe, unlike most continental powers' (Mallinson, 2010: 6). Trade was, and remains, vital to the Dutch economy, with very high rates of international commerce as a proportion of its national wealth. As early as the 1815 Congress of Vienna, however, the Netherlands had abandoned great power pretensions and, 'Non-involvement became the mainstay of Dutch foreign policy' (2010: 7). The Netherlands remained neutral throughout World War I, avoiding invasion and profiting to a degree from its position.

During the interwar years, the Dutch remained unaligned. There was little debate among decision-makers as to whether the policy remained credible in an increasingly unstable Europe. Cornelis Wels has argued that neutrality was 'hardly a policy, rather a faith or a hope.' (Wels, 1982: 82). The German invasion of 1940 appears, however, to have come as a profound shock. It led Eelco Van Kleffens, the Dutch Foreign Minister in exile, to pronounce that 'our pre-war policy of aloofness is stone dead' (Mallinson, 2010: 8). The post-war situation presented an immediate challenge to the strategy of aloofness from great power politics. Germany, by far its most important trading partner, was divided, occupied and weak. The destiny of the Netherlands was in the hands of the allied powers for whom the future of Dutch trade was hardly a priority. The Netherlands was also concerned about the future balance

of power in Europe and wanted to see strong American and British involvement in any new settlement.

In the aftermath of the Second World War, Dutch and Belgian policies came to align far more closely. Although previously there had been tensions between the two states, including territorial disputes and an unsuccessful Belgian attempt to forge an alliance, the changed situation in Europe brought their interests into greater alignment. Both sought a stable and prosperous Germany through its re-integration into Western Europe, and both sought the firm commitment of the US and UK to any future European security arrangements. These shared interests, and the potential for increasing their influence through a collective voice towards the larger powers, brought them together with Luxembourg as the 'Benelux' grouping of states. In 1948 the UK approached the Benelux states with a proposal for extending the 1947 Franco-British Dunkirk Treaty on mutual defence to include them and to lay the foundations for the Western European Union. On their agreement, the treaty was amended to become the 1948 Brussels Treaty. At the same time, Belgium and the Netherlands had begun talks on closer defence cooperation including commissioning work on joint procurement and research (2010, 63). The Brussels Treaty was therefore an historic departure for the Netherlands and Belgium and brought an end to longstanding policies of formal or informal neutrality.

The new dominance of the US in Western Europe, and to a lesser but important extent the new influence of the UK and France in Germany, caused a dramatic shift in the security strategies of the Netherlands and Belgium. It became clear in the late 1940s and early 1950s that their pre-war security concerns would be solved one way or the other by a new European security settlement. To reduce fears of entrapment, or even absorption into the policy priorities of either France or Germany, or both in concert, it was vital for them that the US and UK played a balancing role in that settlement (Stein, 1990: 8). But this, in turn, required sufficient voice and presence from the Netherlands and Belgium within the alliance to influence their allies and protect their concrete interests. Historic strategies were thus turned on their heads. Rather than enforced neutrality or studied aloofness, both states needed to maximise voice and commitment, hence the utility of the Benelux grouping to its members. Membership of the new Western alliances and political organisations

became the means for the Benelux states to exert influence as a new Western European security architecture was constructed and managed in the aftermath of the Second World War.

### *Mitigating entrapment - the struggle for influence*

The logic of the asymmetric alliance configuration suggests that the predominant fear of Belgium and the Netherlands within NATO is one of entrapment rather than abandonment. And indeed, this behaviour is apparent in the way in which both states built their voice and credibility with the US through a significant contribution of military capability. Their armed forces were redirected away from symbolic or last-ditch territorial defences towards integration into a large military alliance, requiring significant long-term investment in defence. This necessitated the development of relatively small but still credible armed forces, balanced across three services, working with their NATO counterparts across sea, air and land domains including 'forward defence' positions in West Germany (Stein, 1990: 85).

The transition to this new posture was challenging for both states given their previously high levels of policy autonomy and their mercantilist preference for not upsetting great powers (Mallinson, 2010: 65,104). Both were concerned about involvement in a militarily aggressive posture vis-à-vis the Soviet Union. As a trading nation with some colonial commitments in Asia, the Dutch preference was for a strong navy, and it had not had the tradition of a large standing army for its territorial defence (1990: 2). Although Belgium had experience of fighting a major land war in Europe, it had twice disbanded its navy. It was abolished first in 1862, only to be resurrected again during the First World War, and then disbanded again in 1927 for budgetary reasons, and then hastily reassembled in 1939. Both states faced challenges but within a few years, however, they had made a major transition from limited armed forces for neutrality to loyal allies with major defence investments.

#### *i. Belgium – struggling with the struggle for influence*

For most of the Cold War period Belgium was a relatively strong defence spender; between 1960 and the mid-1980s it allocated more than 3% of its GDP to defence.

This contribution was at similar levels to those of its European NATO allies, and only 0.5% of GDP behind French defence spending for much of the 1970s and early 1980s. In the 1970s, Belgium was the only NATO country that underwent a constant annual increase in its defence budget as a share of GDP (Coolsaet, 2009: 3). As Coolsaet argues, 'The low diplomatic profile that Belgium adopted, coupled with its steadily growing defence budget, earned the country the image of a 'loyal ally'.' (2009: 30). This is echoed by Sven Biscop, a security analyst and defence policy adviser to the Belgium government, who argues that during the Cold War, 'There was loyalty to the Americans, at that point the politicians imbibed the Atlanticism - sometimes even against public opinion' (Interview 14, June 2016). There was criticism of the credibility of Belgium's military contribution to NATO's policy of 'forward defence' in West Germany (1990: 77), but relative to other European NATO states its commitment in terms of spending and organisation remained substantial.

Following the end of the Cold War, however, Belgium took the so-called 'peace dividend' more quickly and dramatically than most NATO states. In 1991 the armed forces had a total of 85,000 active personnel, 23,000 of which were stationed in Germany (IISS, 1991). In the early 1990s Belgium became one of the first European states to end conscription. By 2012, total armed forces personnel stood at 34,000, and at 1% of GDP its defence spending was, alongside Hungary, the lowest in NATO (IISS, 2012). Together with this dramatic fall in defence spending, the post-Cold War period saw a shift away from Belgium's robust Atlanticism and a return to a pre-NATO European idealism. According to Biscop, the Belgian position 'turned full circle' towards 'an independent European force or entity, and the initial Spaak position of Europe as a third way.' (Interview 14, June 2016). In the late 1990s, the Belgian government under Guy Verhofstadt sought an 'autonomous role' for Europe. Foreign Minister Louis Michel argued that Europe ought to be strong enough to ensure that the world was not dominated by a single superpower (2009: 44). Such concerns were amplified by the unabashed unilateralism of the early years of the administration of US President George W. Bush, and led to a serious diplomatic rift among Europeans with the so-called 'chocolate summit' on European defence cooperation with France, Germany and Luxembourg in April 2003.

Given Belgium's limited military capacity, not only vis-à-vis the US but also in relation to other subordinate states in the alliance, it is perhaps understandable that Belgium has feared an even greater risk of entrapment into the interests of the US in the post-Cold War period. With little means of influencing the US, a common EU defence policy might provide a stronger mitigation of US entrapment with greater opportunities for European influence, particularly given that deeper EU integration and an avowedly 'federalist' perspective are not controversial positions in Belgium (Matellar, 2014: 4). There are, however, paradoxes in the Belgian position on EU defence, as Biscop argues, 'There is a strong commitment to European defence cooperation and often a very proactive attitude to that. But then there is also a lack of defence spending. There is a kind of faith in miracles, as though European defence will fall from the sky' (Interview 14, June 2016). This view was echoed in a memo leaked to the Belgian press in 2012; senior officers complained of under-funding and a lack of strategic direction in defence policy. They claimed that, it was 'a dream' to expect the 'sudden salvation' of an 'integrated European army' (Belgian MOD, 2012).

This same reticence to act according to self-professed values is seen in the paradox of strong support for multilateralism together with a pacifist streak, as seen in Belgium's lukewarm support for the First Gulf War in 1991. There is also, however, a widespread concern that reflects Belgium's relative power, which is that even if it spent considerably more on defence, its armed forces could only ever make a relatively small contribution to the alliance. Thus, regardless of effort, it is difficult for Belgium to gain significant influence over any particular dimension of the foreign policy of the US. Such a view appears to be held among the public and some Belgian decision-makers. As Biscop argues,

'What people have in their mind, including some of the politicians, is that Belgium is a small country so nothing is expected from us... there's no expectation from public opinion that Belgium does something: "No. We're a small country."' (Interview, 14: June 2016).

The theory developed in this thesis suggests that as a subordinate state in an asymmetric alliance Belgium will primarily seek influence to avoid or at least mitigate entrapment. But the clear difficulty for Belgium is its relative paucity of military



capacity through which to attempt to exert influence. It is perhaps unsurprising then that there is a such strong emphasis on ideas around defence cooperation through the European Union, which might serve Belgium's interests more effectively, giving it greater voice and influence. As Coolsaet argues, in the absence of significant military capabilities, 'This is the only way to at least partially shield a small country, lacking the very instruments of power, from a return to the bullying of the balance of power and the unpredictability of great powers' politics' (Coolsaet, 2009: 48). On the other hand, while there is support for European autonomy in defence and security, there also remains strong political support for NATO. In another policy shift, defence Minister Pieter De Crem argued in 2008 that 'transatlantic relations should be resumed urgently' (2009: 49).

And, crucially, when it comes to the form and deployment of its military capabilities, Belgium does in fact appear to use them in pursuit of a struggle for influence, just as the asymmetric alliance theory would suggest. Despite the decline in defence spending as a share of GDP, and despite apparent preferences for more autonomous EU defence structures over US domination, Belgium has sought to try and maintain a balanced force structure as the best means to influence and contribute to NATO and US-led operations. As Biscop describes,

'Belgium's ambition has been to create in every component - army, navy and air - a less wide-ranging but well-chosen capability mix that allows each to operate across the entire spectrum of operations' (Interview 14: June 2016).

While Belgium has greatly reduced personnel numbers and units of equipment such as aircraft, tanks and ships since the end of the Cold War, it still seeks to be able to contribute combat capability to air and maritime operations and to deploy a battalion of around 1200 troops as part of a multinational expeditionary force. Belgium only maintains lightly armoured vehicles, having chosen to retire its Leopard 1 main-battle tank. While this partly reflects the shift towards lighter expeditionary forces seen across all NATO states in the post-Cold War years (Belgian Government, 2000), Belgium has gone further than most in reducing its heavy armour and it has thus narrowed its spectrum of capabilities. Thus, while it maintains a small group of capable Special Forces troops, it has risked its credibility over combat land

operations, choosing to rely more often on air and maritime capabilities and offering its land forces in supporting roles such as force protection, as it did in Afghanistan (Belgian Foreign Office, 2016). Biscop insists, however, that arguments over a balanced force remain compelling for Belgium as a prerequisite for flexibility and influence,

‘You need a serious combat capacity in every force so that in every scenario where you want to do something you can. In that way you have maximum political flexibility. Otherwise very quickly you’ll be in cases where you want to do something but you don’t have anything that’s relevant. So you become irrelevant militarily and also politically’ (Interview 14: June 2016).

The logic of military capability for influence is also emphasised by the Belgian military. The Belgian Ministry of Defence emphasises that, ‘Small countries whose economies depend on other countries definitely need to develop a solid reputation on the international scene’ (Belgian Ministry of Defence, 2014: 27). And a senior Belgian officer also argues that, ‘Balanced forces are important because they provide for strategic agility; we still want to retain a spectrum of capabilities.’ (Interview 17: June 2014). Although interviewees note that there is often a debate among decision-makers about the shape of their armed forces, Belgian officials and most politicians understand the notion that military capability is necessary to preserve influence and fend off political irrelevance. Similarly in the Foreign Ministry the logic of influence through military contribution is clear. As Biscop argues,

‘Often it’s the Foreign Ministry pushing on operations because they know we have to be there at some point because if not it will cost us in other dossiers... diplomats always want us to do our bit and fly the flag’ (Interview 14: June 2016).

Thus, while the preference of some, though not all, Belgians is for an EU-based foreign and defence policy that might better mitigate the risk of entrapment into US policies, it remains the case that it is largely by acting alongside the Americans that Belgium demonstrates its commitment and relevance. It has supported most NATO operations, playing important combat air and maritime roles in the Libyan operations in 2011, providing air strikes and force protection for coalition airfields in Afghanistan

and air strikes in Iraq and Syria. The number of Belgian air sorties in operations in 2011 over Libya, for example, were proportionately high for the size of the state, winning praise from US defence officials, “Every time there was a really hazardous mission, they [the Belgians] put their hands up” (Rachman, 2011). Thus, while the relative scale of the Belgian contribution to NATO and US-led operations is clearly an issue, Belgium does make a small but visible and credible contribution, particularly in the air and maritime domains. It may be that Belgium is struggling with the struggle for influence, but decision-makers still value the role played by its armed forces in ensuring influence and mitigating the risks of entrapment.

## ii. The Netherlands – ‘aspiring to the A-Team’

Much like Belgium, the Netherlands ‘played the role of faithful ally’ to the US during the Cold War. According to Alfred van Staden, during the 1950s and 1960s ‘the country demonstrated an extreme loyalty to the USA and to NATO policies’ (van Staden, 1995: 39). And, as with their Belgian counterparts, Dutch leaders stood their ground against huge domestic protests over American policies on nuclear weapons in the 1980s (van Staden, 1997: 92). The Netherlands also maintained comparatively high defence spending levels throughout the Cold War. Dutch scholars also argue that the Netherlands pursued a policy for influence through its military contribution to the alliance. van Staden argues that, ‘The Dutch attempted to capitalise on their loyalty to the USA in order to strengthen their position in Western Europe’ (1995: 41). Van Staden argues that the Netherlands contributed significant military forces to ensure that the role of larger European states was not dominant and that there was also a strong voice against European alternatives to NATO; Dutch governments remained particularly resistant to non-NATO European defence initiatives throughout the Cold War. Despite this emphasis on loyalty to the US and NATO, however, the Dutch came in for criticism during the Cold War for not putting sufficient troop numbers into the alliance’s ‘forward defence’ strategy (1990: 91). The Netherlands, like many European NATO states, placed more faith in the deterrent power of strategic US nuclear forces than conventional territorial forces in Europe (1990: 39).

In the post-Cold War period the Netherlands followed a similar spending trajectory to that of Belgium, although it did not fall quite so precipitously at the turn of the

century, standing at 1.3% of GDP in 2012 (SIPRI). Historically, the key difference between the Dutch and Belgian armed forces lies in the superior scale and breadth of Dutch naval capability. While Belgium has minesweepers and multipurpose frigates, the Netherlands has these capabilities together with submarines, destroyers and amphibious forces, though their air forces are similar, and have grown more so in scale in recent years. As with Belgium, the Dutch also limited their land-fighting capabilities by removing heavy armour, although as will be seen in the next chapter, this was highly controversial and has been ameliorated to a degree through cooperation with Germany.

Like Belgium, the Netherlands also has a strong tradition of multilateralism going back to the contributions of Hugo Grotius to the study of international law in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century. And there remains a concern in Dutch politics with making multilateralism work, which is evident in the historically relaxed attitude to European integration; it might be argued that this culture is an understandable reflection of the interest that small states have in shaping a more rules-based world around them. On the other hand, Dutch multilateralism has not significantly diluted its Atlanticism. The Netherlands has not promoted the path of European integration as an alternative means of defence to the same degree as Belgium, although it has supported the development of a defence and security role for the EU. And in the post-Cold War period, the Netherlands has strongly maintained its approach of contributing forces for influence; as with Belgium, it is this that has justified the retention of forces balanced across services and capabilities. As Philip Everts argues,

‘...governments of all political persuasions preferred to keep a relatively small but ‘multi-purpose’ army that could fight alongside the major allies, the United States in particular, albeit in the role of ‘junior partner’ (Everts, 2012: 85).

And Rem Korteweg has argued that a desire for the Netherlands ‘to belong to the A-Team’ can be observed in the attitudes of decision makers towards defence policy,

‘Rather than focus on any specific threat, following the end of the Cold War the opportunity arose to use the military instrument to increase Dutch international political influence by participating in expeditionary crisis-management operations. It

was declared in terms of an international political ambition; relevant military capabilities could increase international political influence.’ (Korteweg: 2011).

While Belgium and the Netherlands have both reduced defence spending as a share of GDP by a considerable amount in the post-Cold War period (see tables 5.1 - 5.4 below), they have not significantly altered their foreign policy and levels of ambition in the deployment of their armed forces, here conceived of as strategic ends. They continue to retain balanced forces and use them to provide support for US foreign policies and US-led military operations. It can be argued, therefore, that both states exhibit the logic of behavior we would expect to see in an asymmetrical alliance, i.e., a focus on military contribution in order to maximise influence to mitigate entrapment. This is despite the significant differences between the Netherlands and Belgium and their other subordinate allies at the unit-level. In Belgium in particular, the effects of relative size among allies, of a federalist view of European integration and of a historically pacifistic disposition among the population can be seen to have an effect on Belgian policy. Yet, the logic of deploying their forces for influence remains strong.

#### *Hedging against abandonment – defence industry*

As shown in the previous chapter, the UK and France still have sufficient economies of scale to retain significant indigenous industrial capacity and critical technologies, even if this increasingly requires cooperation with others to sustain. For Belgium and the Netherlands there has never been a credible aspiration to such indigenous industrial capability across all capabilities. A return to anarchic conditions in Europe following the withdrawal of the US security guarantee would be likely to leave Belgium and the Netherlands exposed once again and forced to seek new alliances or revert to previous policies of neutrality. The capacity for conventional territorial defence drawn from autonomous industry would be limited. For Belgium the situation is particularly pronounced, as Dick Zandee et al argue with regard to Belgian defence industrial capacity, ‘arms production in Belgium is not, and never was, a privileged instrument for expressing sovereignty or power on the international stage’ (Zandee et al, 2016: 7). As such, defence industrial policy tends to be largely driven by domestic economic factors and the viability of certain industries and technologies.

The federalisation of Belgium with arms export licenses granted at the regional level also hinder a truly national strategy (2016: 4),

‘Even speaking of a “Belgian” defence industry may be an exaggeration, as the decisions guiding the sector are mainly influenced by local job and territorial development issues, with no or little concertation with the federal level or the other regions.’ (2016: 7)

By contrast, the Netherlands does have an explicit defence industrial strategy, and there is input from the MOD and armed forces as to what is required and priority technology areas are set out,

‘Despite its small size, the NL-DSI is considered important for serving the interests of the Dutch armed forces, the defence and technological base in the country and the economy in more general terms. The Dutch navy and the air force are the main customers. The national technological base is particularly relevant for these two armed services’ (2016: 3).

This does not mean, however, that the Netherlands can approach the levels of autonomy sought by France and the UK. While the Netherlands can prioritise the retention of certain onshore technologies, the general approach is for ‘off the shelf’ acquisitions. Both Belgium and the Netherlands can also use their leverage in purchasing major equipment platforms from larger producer states to seek ‘industrial offsets’, i.e., reciprocal investments or niche elements of the production of equipment, which provide a certain percentage of the purchase cost. In the case of the F16 both Belgium and the Netherlands were involved in co-production of the aircraft (Hartley, 2004: 130).

In the absence of the strategic autonomy provided by an indigenous defence industry to the national armed forces, it is difficult for Belgium and the Netherlands to envisage a role for their armed forces in hedging against abandonment by the US. Yet there is some hedging value in simply maintaining armed forces for an unpredictable future, and as potential contributions to any future alliances, were NATO to fail and be replaced by, for example, a common defence under EU

auspices. Alexander Mattelaer argues, for example, that the Belgian defence budget ought to be viewed as ‘a strategic insurance policy’ that, ‘forms the ultimate stopgap solution for any unexpected disaster that may befall the population.’ (Mattelaer, 2014: 3).

### *Autonomy for positive or idiosyncratic interests*

Neither Belgium nor the Netherlands can aspire to operational autonomy underpinned by an indigenous defence industrial base. They cannot afford to produce their own aircraft nor do so through mutual dependence with others, as France and the UK are seeking to do. Both must therefore accept more constraints on their operational autonomy than France and the UK, particularly in the domain of aerospace, where both rely on American-made and supplied F16 jets. Thus, they both retain immediate operational autonomy in terms of decision-making over the capabilities that they operate, but expect to operate with allies in a more integrated fashion, and so the need for deep strategic autonomy over the design and modification of their equipment is not so important as it is to France and the UK.

With regards to defence of their airspace, both states retain a ‘quick reaction alert’ (QRA) capability for air defence, which is provided by their F16 aircraft, and the development of deeper cooperation in this field will be considered in more detail below. Given that Europe’s two largest ports are at Rotterdam in the Netherlands and Antwerp in Belgium, the two states must also ensure the security of these ports and the waters around them. Both states retain mine-counter measure (MCM) vessels and frigates. According to a senior Belgian officer, ‘We still maintain a broad spectrum for the navy; the security of Rotterdam and Antwerp are core sovereign requirements.’ (Interview 18: June 2014)

In terms of positive or idiosyncratic interests, neither Belgium nor the Netherlands has the capacity to make any significant military intervention alone in the defence of non-territorial interests. Both can, however, provide their forces to multinational missions; they have, for example, provided ships to the EU’s Operation Atalanta anti-piracy mission. And they have considerable economic interests in trade and maritime transportation; exports accounted for 82% of the GDP of both the Netherlands and

Belgium in 2012; this compares with a global average of 31% (World Bank, 2016). Thus, the clear mutual interest in the security of trading routes is well-noted (Belgian MOD, 2012).

### *Military capabilities as means to strategic ends*

It has been shown that Belgium and the Netherlands structure and use their military capabilities in line with the expectations of behaviour under the asymmetric alliance configuration. While they may emphasise values such as multilateralism in their foreign policy objectives, there is little support for the notion that they generate and deploy military capabilities *predominantly* in defence of multilateralist principles and a commitment to the observation international law. Dutch support for the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003, for example, was viewed by many as running counter to the very notion of legitimate multilateral action that decision-makers in the Netherlands often claim to champion (Everts, 2012). And both Dutch and Belgian contributions to Afghanistan were viewed as transactional contributions intended to maintain influence and credibility with the US, rather than to defend any particular Dutch or Belgian interests, values-based or otherwise (Eilstrup 2014: 93) As Korteweg says of Dutch operations in Afghanistan, it was intended to 'demonstrate that [the Netherlands] was a serious and reliable member of the 'A-team'.' (Korteweg, 2011: 255) These cultural 'value-interests' cannot be discounted entirely and will no doubt be weighed in the balance by decision-makers, but they do not offer a compelling alternative explanation for the generation and use of military capabilities by Belgium and the Netherlands. The 'struggle for influence' thesis provides a more plausible general explanation for the retention and deployment of balanced forces.

It is, however, also the case that the financial commitment to the struggle for influence cannot be described as wholehearted, particularly as regards Belgium's armed forces. During the period in question, Belgium was accused by senior members of its own armed forces of lacking any clear policy direction at all, and of being confused as to the strategic ends that its military should serve. And both Belgium and the Netherlands have recently narrowed the breadth of their warfighting capabilities by deleting heavy armour from their inventories. On the other hand, high-end, war-fighting capabilities are still recognised by decision-makers in both states



as the most important means by which to retain influence and fend off political irrelevance in the eyes of the United States and larger European states<sup>38</sup>.

Autonomous military capability remains important, both for influence and for territorial defence, and some discretionary contributions to operations for positive interests. Even here, however, during the period in question there have been increasing concerns as to the viability of maintaining capabilities, even for the defence of sovereign airspace and waters. As such, and as observed in the previous chapter on France and the UK, the strategic ends of the Netherlands and Belgium are also increasingly vulnerable to the cost of maintaining military capabilities. It is to this issue that the chapter now turns.

### **iii. The logic of a crisis: Dutch and Belgian strategic ends under pressure**

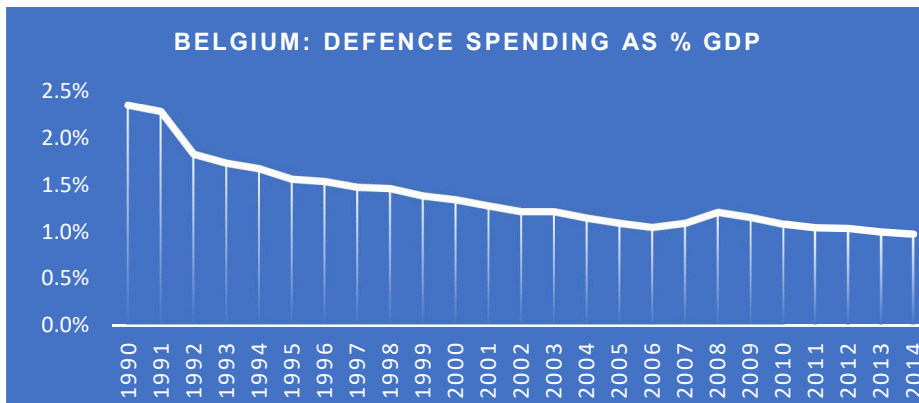
#### *The affordability of military capability and the need for efficiency*

##### **i. Belgium**

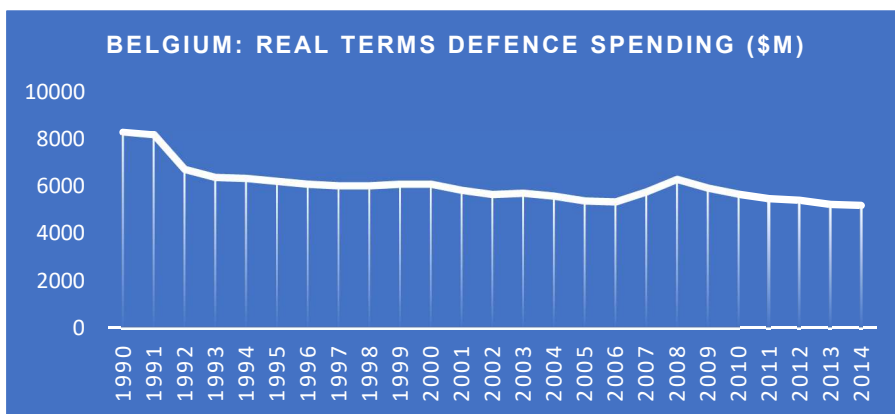
As is the case with the UK and France, explanations for the decline in Belgian military capacity can be found at both unit and system level. Spending is a central factor. In 1991 Belgium spent 2.3% of its GDP on defence. While spending fell significantly as an immediate response to the end of the Cold War, it made a further rapid decline as a share of GDP from the turn of the century, falling from 1.3% in 2000 to just 1% in 2012 (see figure 5.1). In real terms, however, Belgian spending on defence was broadly flat between the mid 1990s and the financial crisis, and real terms spending was in fact greater in 2008 than it was in 1995, presumably due to operations, as can be seen in Figure 5.2. As with the UK and France, until the financial crisis of 2008, Belgium was not making significant reductions in real defence spending, rather it was choosing to spend the proceeds of economic growth in other policy areas, including its struggle to bring down public debt to meet the criteria for joining the Euro (Kuipers, 2006 :114).

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<sup>38</sup> And more recently, in December 2015, the Belgian Government announced the 'Strategic Plan for Defence 2030', which included a commitment to spend €9.2bn on capital investments such as replacements for F16 fighters, frigates and MCM vessels (Belgian Defence Ministry, 2015)



**Figure 5.1. Belgian defence spending as share of GDP 1990-2014 (source: SIPRI)**



**Figure 5.2. Real terms Belgian defence spending 1990-2014 (source: SIPRI)**

The failure to maintain higher levels of GDP spending has clearly had an impact, however, on the scale and breadth of Belgium's military capabilities. As argued by some analysts, it may be that those unit-level aspects of Belgian domestic political culture addressed above have eroded the once-strong Atlanticism of the political leadership and thus the case for higher defence spending. As the Belgian MOD notes,

'Belgium lacks a well-established tradition of strategic reflection and there has never been a broad societal debate on defence. This can probably be explained by the fact that Belgian society is characterised by a deep-seated pacifism. Security, which partly results from more than 60 years of efficient transatlantic defence cooperation, is perceived in Belgium today as an inherent characteristic of our society' (Belgian MOD, 2014).

Given such a disposition among the public, it is perhaps unsurprising that few Belgian politicians make the case for greater defence investment, focussing instead on more popular issues. As explored in the previous chapter, however, the problem with 'flat in real terms' defence budgets is that they fail to keep pace with the defence inflationary trends associated with technological advances in military equipment and in personnel costs. Throughout the post-Cold War period the position of the Belgian navy in particular has been increasingly perilous.

As with the UK and France, Belgium has failed to align its defence budget with its defence planning assumptions for any significant length of time; successive attempts to bring capabilities into line with aspirations have been overtaken by insufficient funding and over-optimistic planning. As Biscop notes,

'Invariably the budgets included in successive capability plans were revised downwards before the plan could be fully implemented.... savings made on personnel have never been reinvested in defence but have served to fill the overall deficit in the federal budget' (Biscop, 2011: 2).

A memo written by senior Belgian officers and leaked from the Belgian MOD in 2012 noted that the last three strategic plans for the armed forces have failed to hold personnel numbers at the level required. To maintain the ability to deploy a battalion-size force of around 1200 troops and current air and sea capabilities, total personnel numbers of around 30,000 will be 'the minimally required critical mass' (Biscop, 2011: 2). And even if Belgium were to immediately replace its ageing equipment it risks not having trained staff in place to operate it; the average age of Belgian officers is ten years older than in similar armed forces (Belgian MOD Memo, 2012). The memo concluded that,

'The armed forces are facing a capacity versus commitments dilemma today. This is caused by the gap between the available numbers of personnel, equipment, logistical support and training resources on one hand and the demand and requirements of the current foreign policy and operational deployment on the other' (2012).

As such, the ability of Belgium to continue to maintain balanced forces on current trends is increasingly improbable. Relatively low defence spending is compounded by the fact that much of the armed forces' equipment was purchased during the Cold War or shortly afterwards; replacement will be expensive, particularly if Belgium seeks to maintain similar defence planning assumptions. Replacements for its most expensive platforms, such as F16 aircraft, frigates and MCM vessels risk overwhelming the defence budget and will require significant additional spending (Interview 14, June 2016).

It has been argued in the previous section of this chapter, however, that despite its reluctance to increase real-terms defence spending, Belgium continues to pursue the strategic end of a struggle for influence within the NATO alliance. As such, Belgium can be viewed as prone to the same systemic problems of increasingly expensive personnel and capability costs. Belgium faces the additional difficulty that even if defence spending were to stabilise at around 1% of GDP or even to rise significantly, it will find it very difficult to sustain the balanced forces necessary to pursue its struggle for influence due to the increasing cost of maintaining military capabilities. While Belgium had not sought to keep up with its peers in terms of defence spending as a share of GDP, the financial crisis of 2008 precipitated real terms cuts and thus created a sense of crisis.

As with the situation in the UK and France, the financial crisis thus exacerbated problems already apparent in a fragile force structure. In response to the crisis Belgium cut its defence budget by 10% between 2009 and 2011 amounting to annual cuts of around €130m. The bulk of the savings came from losing bases and cutting army numbers (European Parliament, 2011). In interviews for this thesis, some Belgian decision-makers spoke of their fears of falling below a point of critical mass at which particular capabilities would no longer be sustainable. In the light of the financial crisis, the Belgian military was particularly concerned about the Army's ability to maintain an artillery battalion (Interview 16, June 2014) and even basic territorial defence functions such as the protection of its own airspace (Belgian MOD Note). There was a growing concern that the use of the Belgian armed forces as a means for visibility and influence was at risk. Officers warned about the threat to Belgium's political influence in terms of its military credibility with its allies,

‘This means the political commitment to participate fully in international decision-making.... It also means participating in military operations to a proportionate degree and bearing the risks of solidarity. For this, military power must also be credible.’ (Belgian MOD, 2012)

Given Belgium’s deep and long-standing defence cooperation with the Netherlands, there were also fears that it would no longer be a credible partner for such cooperation if capabilities declined any further. Biscop notes the concerns among the Dutch armed forces, ‘Are the Belgians going to be able to continue paying their share of this? If not, we should be looking to other partners.’ (Interview 14: June 2016) Similarly, senior armed forces officers wrote that,

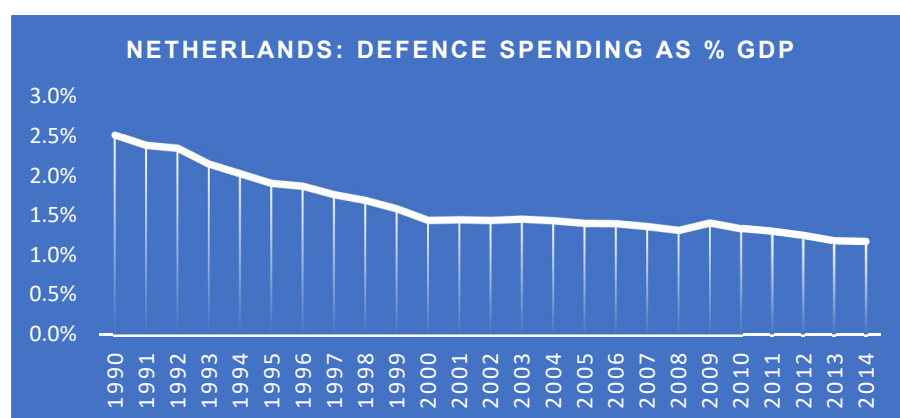
‘It is illusory to assume that other countries would be interested in extensive cooperation when the Belgian military capabilities would have little operational or other added value.’ (Belgian MOD, 2012)

It has been seen that despite the apparent defence policy vacuum decried by its military leadership in 2012, Belgium has shown no intention of renouncing its long-standing foreign policy approach and the role that the military plays within that, conceptualised in this thesis as the ‘struggle for influence’ within an asymmetric alliance. And it is this dilemma that forced Belgium, and more specifically its military officers and officials, to look towards deeper cooperation with others to seek greater efficiency and maintain capabilities that might otherwise be at risk. Due to strikingly similar problems and a track-record of successful bi-lateral cooperation, the Netherlands represents an unsurprising partner of choice.

## ii. The Netherlands

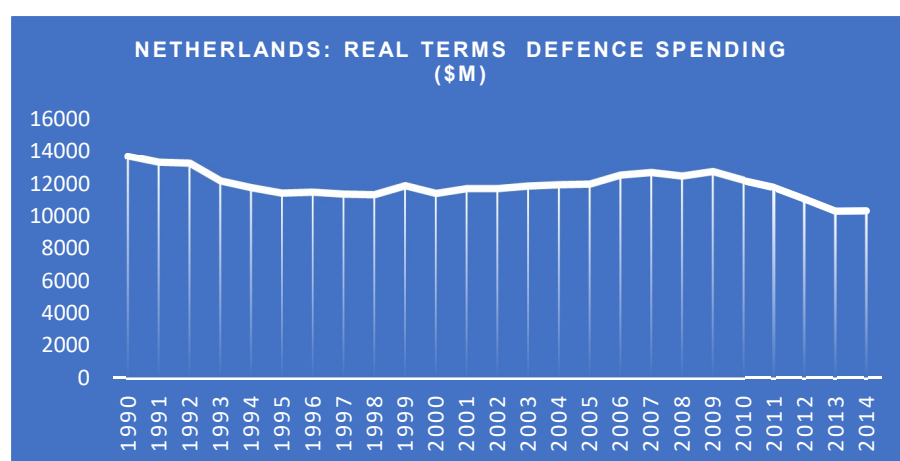
In 1991 the Netherlands spent 2.4% of GDP on defence and had a total of 101,000 active armed forces personnel, including an armoured brigade (IISS, 1991) deployed in Germany (Stein, 1990). Like Belgium, following the end of the Cold War the Netherlands had phased out conscription by 1996, and drawn down the scale of its forces. In 2000 defence spending as a share of GDP stood at 1.4% and by 2012,

had fallen to 1.3%, with the number of active personnel falling to 37,000, as is shown in figure 5.3.



**Figure 5.3. Netherlands defence spending as share of GDP 1990-2014 (source: SIPRI)**

As with other states under consideration in this thesis, in real terms the picture looks different; the Netherlands spent more on defence in 2011 than it did in 1994, as can be seen in figure 5.4. This is partly explained by its major commitment to US-led operations in Afghanistan. As with Belgium, it is the 2008 financial crisis that caused spending to fall significantly in real terms, with the cuts in 2011 causing a sharp real-terms decline.



**Figure 5.4. Real terms Netherlands defence spending 1990-2014 (source: SIPRI)**

The 2000 *Defence White Paper* set out plans for Dutch armed forces to field a broad spectrum of capabilities relevant to the 21<sup>st</sup> century security environment (Government of the Netherlands, 2000). And the Dutch armed forces were described in the 2012 International Institute of Strategic Studies (IISS) *Military Balance* survey

as 'a motivated and professional force capable of participating in demanding joint operations in an Alliance context' (IISS, 2012: 138). Despite the aspiration to retain balanced forces, however, the Netherlands has found it increasingly difficult to maintain such a balance across and within its three services. It has followed a familiar pattern of 'salami-slicing' its major platforms, such as fighter jets and ships, in favour of an attempt to maintain capability across a broad spectrum. While the 2000 *Defence White Paper* set out ambitious plans, it also outlined cuts of 136 Leopard 2 tanks, two frigates, three mine-counter measure (MCM) vessels and 18 F16 fighter jets. Even the aspirations of the White Paper quickly proved difficult to meet, however, with the Orion P3 maritime patrol aircraft fleet reduced in 2000 and then completely removed from service in 2006 and sold to Germany (Chuter, 2015).

The financial crisis of 2008 led to significant fiscal retrenchment from which defence spending was not exempted. A letter from the Dutch Minister of Defence to Parliament in 2011 set out the seriousness of the situation, and the need for 'radical measures' to bring spending under control (Netherlands MOD, 2011). The cuts reduced the defence budget from €8.5bn in 2011 to €7.5bn by 2015, and reductions in capability were significant. In terms of retaining balanced forces, the most serious cut was the complete deletion of the Dutch main battle tank, the Leopard 2. In the absence of a main battle tank, the Dutch Army would no longer be capable of leading combined arms maneuver on the battlefield, a capability it had retained since the end of the Cold War<sup>39</sup>. Once more, the armed forces faced the 'salami slicing' of capabilities, with the navy losing four MCM vessels and the air force having its F16 fighters reduced from 87 to 68. The Dutch MOD voiced particular concern about the operational impact of cuts to F16 fighters and the ability to contribute to international missions, with 'fewer opportunities to provide air support to its own units and those of allies in operations' (Netherlands MOD, 2011: 19).

The cuts led to concerns over the credibility of the Dutch armed forces. Former military figures and the Government's own advisory board argued that the cuts would cause lasting damage, and cautioned that, 'the exercise of political power is neither credible nor effective if it is not backed up with military power' (AIV, 2012). One

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<sup>39</sup> The impact of the decision to divest from tanks and the mitigating steps taken by the Dutch Government will be considered in greater detail in the next chapter.

former Dutch Army officer argued that defence cuts in the Netherlands and elsewhere would 'decrease Washington's willingness to give Europe's own concerns a sympathetic ear' (Hernandez, 2013: 9). The Netherlands thus found itself in a very similar position to Belgium regarding the challenge of maintaining a balanced force and the threat to its ability to exert influence with the US and other allies.

### *Common problem, common solution?*

There is a long history of Dutch-Belgian defence cooperation dating back to the late 1940s (Parrein, 2011; Homan, 2012; Sauer, 2015). It grew increasingly more significant during the Cold War, particularly in the maritime domain through close naval cooperation. In the 1950s the two states agreed on a joint command structure for their navies at times of war. They cooperated through NATO on the security of the English Channel through the standing naval force, STANNAVFORCHAN. In the 1970s further naval cooperation was institutionalised through the 'BENESAM' arrangements<sup>40</sup>. The 1970s saw a collaboration with France to acquire the tripartite mine-hunter ships. In 1987, together with Luxembourg, Belgium and the Netherlands signed a further agreement on cooperation and coordination in defence. In the 1970s and 1980s, the Dutch and Belgian air forces took a joint approach to acquisition of their F16 jets from the US and collaborated over support through the European Participating Air Forces initiative, and through which there is now substantial cooperation for support to their aircraft (NATO, 2012).

Though not exclusively driven by moments of budgetary crisis, Dutch-Belgian cooperation has reflected a need to find efficiencies, particularly in the post-Cold War years when spending was quickly and drastically curtailed, and in the aftermath of the financial crisis. While defence cooperation is long-standing, moves towards the mutualisation of elements of military capability involving deep cooperation are, however, a more recent development. In these deeper forms of cooperation, it will be seen that a common causal component is the imminent threat of falling below a threshold beyond which a capability is unsustainable, and the force structure loses its balance, in turn reducing military and political flexibility. It has been shown that the

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<sup>40</sup> Be-ne-sam stands for *Belgisch-Nederlandse marinesamenwerking*, which translates into English as 'Belgium-Netherlands naval cooperation'.



trend of flat or declining budgets and gradual escalation in the cost of acquiring and maintaining military capabilities combined with the shock of the financial crisis brought about an immediate need to consider ways to improve efficiency through cooperation. Given that defence cooperation between Belgium and the Netherlands was widely regarded as successful, particularly between their navies, there was confidence among the military to consider proposals and high-level political interest in doing so. The success of naval cooperation was viewed as a potential role model for other services (Interview 14: June 2016; Interview 16: June 2014). As a Dutch official says in relation to the moves towards new initiatives that began in 2012,

‘One of the drivers is the acknowledgement that in the past two decades we have had so many budget cuts - it’s true of all European countries - that you need cooperation to keep some capabilities that you cannot afford to keep on your own.’ (Interview 24: June 2016)

And Dutch defence analyst Dick Zandee notes that the need to look towards deeper forms of defence cooperation to drive efficiencies and maintain capabilities is now widely accepted among senior officials and politicians,

‘Since 2010 the line has been “multinational defence cooperation is not a choice, it is a must”. This is the official line of the Ministry of Defence, presented time after time in Parliament. The Belgians have exactly the same view’ (Interview 21: September 2014).

Indeed, senior officers in the Belgian armed forces argue that cooperative measures were required to at least mitigate the effects of the cuts, and that both Belgium and the Netherlands were at risk of losing entire capabilities. According to one senior officer,

‘Both our countries once again had to reduce their personnel strength and military capabilities and to limit capital investments. These problems happened in Belgium and the Netherlands almost at the same moment. And what was important with regard to this driver was that both our countries went underneath what I call the

‘capability threshold’ to maintain a set of capabilities within our national inventories.’  
(Interview 16: June 2014)

With both states potentially facing the loss of discrete capabilities or the ability to use capabilities for anything more than territorial obligations, decision-makers faced critical decisions as to the future of the policy of maintaining balanced forces. A senior Belgian officer argues that the choice facing the armed forces was between a balanced force and whole capability specialisation,

‘We chose to maintain, for as long as is possible, a balanced force structure. That’s a force structure with all the services, and within the services all the necessary capabilities to act in an autonomous way: that’s a balanced force structure. We could have chosen another option. We could choose to no longer maintain a balanced structure but choose to specialise, to no longer maintain an artillery battalion, an ISTAR battalion etc. We could have said: “Okay we’ll get rid of artillery as we got rid of heavy tanks and the money we save by doing that we invest in other capabilities”. This is specialisation versus a multi-purpose force structure. When you’re getting that small it’s an unavoidable choice. But once we chose to maintain a balanced force we had to go to other countries. Then you need to go down the multinational route’ (Interview 16: June 2014).

Officers from the Belgian and Dutch armed forces thus began discussions on ways and means to drive efficiency, but with the particular aim of maintaining capabilities through cooperation. The outcome of these discussions and those between political counterparts in both states was the 2012 Benelux Declaration.

### *2012 Benelux Declaration*

The 2012 Benelux<sup>41</sup> Declaration represents an evolution of existing cooperation and an attempt to build on previous successes, particularly that between navies (Belgian Government, 2012). New initiatives were driven ‘bottom-up’ from the military level, as

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<sup>41</sup> While this agreement is also relevant to Luxembourg, this thesis will focus only on the Netherlands-Belgium bilateral aspects of cooperation.

historically has been the case with Dutch-Belgian cooperation. As a senior Belgian officer explains,

‘It was a military decision. It was a military initiative. It was tasked by our Chief of the Defence Staff, and all the initial discussions happened with only military officers around the table. Once all possible fields of cooperation were examined, explored and developed, and once we had high confidence with all the service chiefs then we went to the political level. Only then did we start the discussions on the political-military level’ (Interview 16: June 2014).

Given the difficult fiscal positions in both the Netherlands and Belgium, the respective governments embraced the plans, particularly as they might offer opportunities for mitigating the most negative aspects of the cuts that had been announced in 2011. A Dutch official claims it as ‘an easy decision’ for politicians to make,

‘The only alternative was losing military capabilities or losing political autonomy or losing sovereignty. Moreover, we had the previous experience. There was the effect of making savings in the mid-term. Our colleagues abroad quickly saw the benefits for themselves.’ (Interview 24: June 2016).

As such, the 2012 Declaration represented a new search for opportunities in an existing relationship. The 2012 Benelux Declaration notes, ‘the field of tension between operational demands on the one hand, and shrinking defence budgets on the other.’ The goal is therefore, ‘to improve the efficiency of our defence efforts’, while recognising ‘the preservation of autonomy in fulfilling the national level of ambition’ (Government of Belgium, 2012). The remit for cooperation outlined is very wide, including ‘logistics and maintenance; education and training; the execution of military tasks; and procurement.’ In terms of concrete initiatives, the Declaration calls for feasibility studies in the following areas:

- maintenance and operational cooperation regarding the NH90 helicopter;
- synergies in Air Policing;

- shared paratrooper training at one location;
- sharing and specialisation of exercising and training facilities across a wide range of military activities;
- cooperation between armies;
- possibilities for joint procurement, standardisation and interoperability based on respective long-term investment plans.

The primary motivation for the 2012 Benelux Declaration was thus to seek new cooperative initiatives to maintain a balanced force with a broad range of capabilities through greater efficiency. It was, in this sense, a direct answer to the challenges raised by long-term 'flat in real terms' budgets and the shock of the financial crisis. The question arises, however, as to how Belgium and the Netherlands could cooperate more deeply in these areas. This will be the subject of the final section of the chapter.

#### **iv. The logic of mutualisation: the 2012 *Benelux Declaration***

##### *Cooperation for efficiency – structural opportunities and constraints*

The theory developed and deployed in this thesis is that the asymmetric alliance configuration shapes the behaviour of subordinate states, both in terms of the generation and use of their military capabilities, and the scope for cooperation with others. The alliance provides for a temporal period in which suppressed balancing between states dampens concerns over relative gains and enables cooperation, even in the most sensitive areas of providing military capability. In this vein, Dutch defence officials refer to the development of 'a kind of theoretical framework' against which states are classified for their potential as close defence cooperation partners. Partners are divided into three groups, 'strategic partners', 'EU and NATO partners' and a final more flexible grouping of 'partners of opportunity' for example states where operations are taking place or their neighbours (Dutch MOD, 2014). As a Dutch official explains,

‘Strategic partners include the US, UK, Norway, France, Belgium, Germany and Luxembourg. The Germans and the Belgians are the most closely involved, and that has to do with common interests in foreign policy, geographical location, basically the same outlook on international affairs, and all are EU or NATO members. We still regard NATO as one of the foundation blocks of our foreign and defence policy’ (Interview 24: June 2016).

Such a statement underlines the importance of the NATO alliance and the presence of common interests. Belgian officials use similar language when they talk about what they regard as the ‘facilitating factors’ for defence cooperation,

‘The facilitating factors are the same: trust, a huge overlap on foreign and security policy and more or less similar strategic culture. Those are valid for every kind of cooperation.’ (Interview 16: June, 2014)

As has been argued in relation to France and the UK, however, while the structural-relational condition of suppressed balancing in an asymmetric alliance provides the possibility for cooperation by removing a fundamental constraint of an anarchic system, there are still powerful constraints on cooperation.

The asymmetric alliance theory suggests that interdependence is low between subordinate states in the alliance. The asymmetry of power within the alliance means that the aggregation of military capabilities is not critical, as it would be in a classic multipolar or ‘balancing’ alliance. This has important implications for the flexibility of subordinate states in the ways and means by which they may meet their strategic ends. It has been seen that subordinate states seek to preserve their flexibility through the maintenance of balanced forces. The specialisation of whole capabilities is therefore seen as a risk to flexibility. As a senior Belgian officer argues,

‘As long as you have a balanced force structure you can do your own thing, regardless of the position of your partner. But once you have decided to specialise you are depending on your partner for certain things and you have constraints on your foreign policy’ (Interview 16: June 2014).

Thus, while Belgium and the Netherlands have a closely aligned worldview, there are still likely to be important differences in how they deal with any given interest related to their strategic ends. This makes perfect alignment over the handling of all their interests highly unlikely. Primarily, as with the UK and France, the main problem lies in aligning their approaches to the strategic end of the struggle for influence over the US. Because the temporal and functional deployment of Dutch and Belgian support for US interests is not critical to the US nor the wider alliance, they may or may not align over a given interest under this strategic end. And if they do align over an interest they may or may not support the US at the same time, nor provide the same form of military contribution in terms of function. As Biscop notes, despite their many similarities, shared outlook and strong history of close defence cooperation with the Netherlands, there are times when Belgium takes a different view over participation for US-led operations:

‘In recent years there has been relatively good participation in operations. But it’s entirely unpredictable. You cannot call the trends. It’s really very much case-by-case and *ad hoc*, so you never really know: “Will we be there or not?” Nobody thought we would do Libya, I didn’t, but we did.’ (Interview 14: June 2016)

The timing and nature of their support for the positive interests of the US is inherently unpredictable because interdependence remains low and policy flexibility is high. Thus, there is a lack of internal alliance pressure to deliver an immediate military support of any particular function. As such, there are difficulties even for very closely aligned states such as Belgium and the Netherlands. Support for the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003 was a point of major diplomatic difference between the two states. As a senior Belgian officer argues by reference to a fictional scenario, even for these two states there are limits, particularly as regards whole capability specialisation,

‘Suppose that the Netherlands and Belgium had agreed that Belgium will specialise in engineering support and the Dutch in ISTAR. Then the Dutch Government decided in 2003 to go to Iraq, then the Belgians would need to go. The Belgians would have had to go to Iraq. The sovereignty issue is much bigger when you have specialised your forces. Then you can no longer say no’ (Interview 16: June 2014).

The inherent flexibility in the asymmetric alliance also leads to a functional flexibility in terms of what is contributed to missions. In the case of Belgium this has led to a focus on contributing air and maritime capabilities, in large part because of the reduced political risk of being at a greater distance from the frontline. As Biscop argues, '[Belgium is] always there if it's for air or naval operations, but it's very tricky to deploy the Army for anything that could be risky, ever since Rwanda.' (Interview 14: June 2016). To a degree the effects of this flexibility of capability function can be seen in the erosion of the capabilities of Belgian land forces; the Army has divested itself of its heavy armour but retains higher-level war-fighting capabilities in the air and maritime domains. Functional flexibility can also be illustrated by the fact that due to controversy over engagement in Libya, the Netherlands chose not to fly combat missions over Libya (Reuters, 2011). Instead it provided airspace patrols and intelligence gathering. It is now necessary to consider actual cases of capability mutualisation to consider how these effects of low interdependence and the possibility of cooperation afforded by the assumed durability of the NATO alliance have shaped concrete cooperation initiatives.

### *Explaining the mutualisation of military capabilities – the Netherlands and Belgium*

As has been shown, the period under examination reflects two major challenges to Dutch and Belgian military capabilities. The first is the longstanding and ongoing impact of flat-real terms spending on military capabilities, often apparent in the continued 'salami slicing' of units of military capabilities such as army battalions, ships and fighter jets. The second is the effects of the international financial crisis, which led to fiscal retrenchment and defence budget cuts. The remainder of this chapter will consider examples of cooperation from this period, including one example from the period before the financial crisis, which is that of the mutualisation of support services to the Dutch and Belgian navies. This has been included because, although it is not related to the search for efficiencies following the financial crisis, it is chronologically contemporary and reflects the already constrained defence spending in both states due to real-terms flat budgets.

The other initiatives considered are drawn from the 2012 Benelux Declaration, which was driven by a combination of both challenges. The Declaration represents a

considered and holistic attempt to respond to the challenge of sustaining military capabilities, although most of its initiatives reflect capability challenges made more acute by the financial crisis. The following section will now focus on a selection of these initiatives in detail, using the hypotheses derived from the theoretical model to do so.

### *Mutualisation of capability at high temporal distance from frontline*

H1: Capability mutualisation may be found at high temporal distance from the frontline, with or without high certainty of support for concrete interests.

#### i. Replacement Mine Counter-Measure (MCM) vessels and frigates

The BENELUX Declaration committed the parties to launching ‘exploratory studies’ into, ‘possibilities for joint procurement, standardisation and interoperability based on the respective long-term investment plans’ (Declaration, 2012). While not referred to directly in the *Declaration*, Belgium and the Netherlands had already begun preliminary discussions over the need for replacement of their ageing MCM vessels and frigates. Dutch-Belgian naval cooperation is one the closest forms of defence cooperation in existence. The two navies operate the same types of ship, have a bi-national headquarters, ‘Admiral Benelux’, and have specialised the support services to their frigates and MCM vessels. Together with France, Belgium and the Netherlands developed and acquired the ‘tripartite’ MCM vessels in the 1970s and 1980s. In 2005, Belgium purchased two ‘multi-purpose’ Karel Doorman class frigates from the Netherlands, meaning that both had the same MCM and frigate types. As will be considered in more detail below, this has had profound implications for current and future cooperation. Having the same ship types has enabled cooperation of unprecedented depth, but with both classes of ships due to be retired within the decade, attention had turned to their replacement during the period under investigation, and the implications for future cooperation.



The acquisition of new ships is of critical importance to BENESAM cooperation<sup>42</sup>. If either party fails to replace their frigates or MCM vessels, acquires a different type, or moves at a very different speed to replace them, then BENESAM cooperation will be at risk of dissolution. A senior Belgian officer argues that naval cooperation has demonstrated that 'having the same equipment is vital, a key success factor' (Interview 18: June 2014). A senior Dutch official agrees,

'Having the same equipment is really important... Ships are expensive, but for both Belgium and the Netherlands the objective is to go on as we have in the past, so we must buy the same frigates and MCM vessels. It is true that only if you do this you can keep up the deep form of integration. The navies both know what they want, but have to pay for it' (Interview 24: June 2016).

The logic of buying new ships together also provides further opportunities to deepen cooperation at the earliest stages. The combination of a bi-national command in the form of Admiral Benelux alongside joint acquisition provides scope for shared concepts of operations and doctrine (Interview 18: June 2014). As a senior Belgian officer explains, by planning for the acquisition of ships at the earliest stage, further opportunities for alignment and efficiency may be available,

'The next step of naval cooperation is to begin from concepts, a joint Dutch-Belgian vision document for a common concept of multi-purpose frigates. Most of the benefits of cooperation can be obtained when you have the same equipment. Training, education, maintenance, same infrastructure.' (Interview 16: June 2014).

The joint acquisition of ships based on joint concepts of operation is significant because it is an example of the mutualisation of a capability at almost every stage: from planning, acquisition and HQ command to support. Ships will remain, however, national in ownership and crew. In terms of the hypothesis drawn from the model, then, the joint acquisition of the ships mean that concrete interests need not necessarily be closely aligned. On the other hand, the emphasis on common concepts of operations suggests that the two states believe it highly likely that

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<sup>42</sup> In 2016, Belgium and the Netherlands signed a Memorandum of Understanding on building new minehunters and frigates together (Naval Technology, 2016)

concrete interests will largely be aligned for the majority of operations. And, as has been discussed, this is reflected in the similarity of Dutch and Belgian concrete interests regarding the security of territorial waters, of trading routes at sea and of the need to contribute capabilities to ensure credibility and influence with the US. The extent to which joint acquisition enables mutualisation of maritime capabilities ever-closer to the frontline of operations will be considered in more detail below.

Defence cuts in the Netherlands in 2011 had the potential for serious disruption to the Benesam arrangements. Given that the Netherlands has a more advanced fleet of frigate-destroyers, the shared type of M-class frigates, which are less capable and ageing, were vulnerable to complete divestment. According to Pieter-Jan Parrein this would 'certainly reduce cooperation for support services as two Belgian M-class frigates would be vastly different from the four remaining Dutch air defence and command frigates' (Parrein, 2011: 162-163). Thus, while it is clear that there are substantial domestic political constraints on Dutch-Belgian defence industrial cooperation, the logic of joint acquisition of ships is strong, and meets the expectation that capability can be mutualised at high temporal distance from the frontline, as is shown in figure 5.5. It will be seen below, however, that Benesam cooperation goes much further than mutualisation at the defence industrial stage.

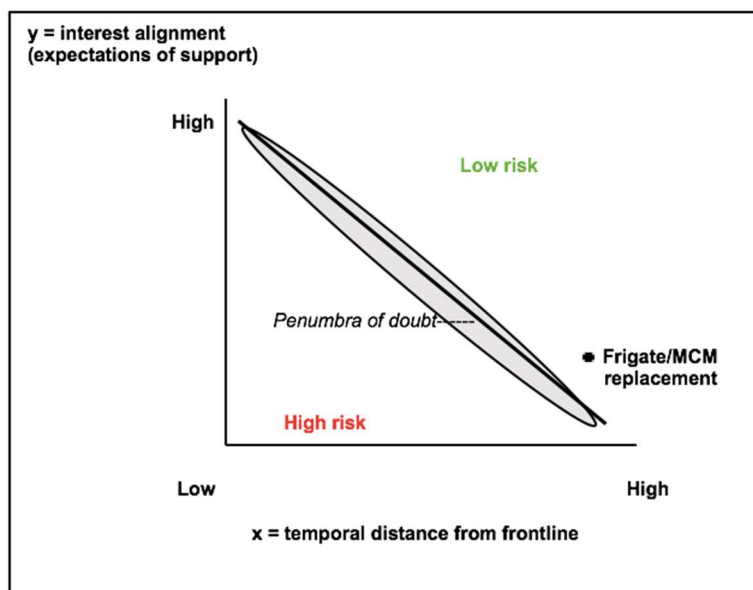


Figure 5.5. Surface ship joint procurement distance from frontline

## *Mutualisation of capabilities on the frontline*

H2: Capability mutualisation may be found at zero temporal-spatial distance from the frontline, where there is a very high certainty of support for concrete interests.

### *i. Air Policing*

The centre-piece initiative of the 2012 Benelux Declaration was a commitment to draw up plans for joint air policing of the airspace of Belgium and the Netherlands. The Declaration states that,

‘We will jointly execute feasibility studies to prepare the ground for decision-making in the short term on... synergies in the area of Air Policing including Quick Reaction Alert and Renegade’ (Government of Belgium, 2012).

According to a senior Belgian officer, the logic behind the initiative was as follows,

‘The idea is to organise the securing of BENELUX air space in a common way using a flip-flop arrangement. Quick Reaction Alert, in principle is no problem. But the same planes will also be responsible for what we call ‘renegade’ operations. That is, for instance, terrorist planes threatening Brussels or the Hague. That would be if, for instance, you have two Belgian F16s flying above the Netherlands and they need to shoot down the renegade terrorist plane above the city of Rotterdam.’ (Interview 16: June 2014)

Officials understand that this raises fundamental questions over the link between sovereignty and lethal force, the chain of command and responsibility for the most fundamental elements of state security. Certain questions arise,

‘Okay, who should give that order to shoot down the plane above the city of Rotterdam? That’s a real issue of sovereignty. Is that a Belgian authority that gives the order? Or must it be a Dutch Minister ordering Belgian pilots?’ (Interview 16: June 2014)

In December 2016, Belgium and the Netherlands signed a technical agreement, which sets out the lines of command when handling such a renegade operation. Under a 'flip-flop' arrangement, Belgium will provide two fighter jets for cover for Benelux airspace for four months, and will be followed by the Netherlands and so on. Under circumstances envisaged by the agreement a Dutch fighter pilot can use lethal force against an aircraft on the command of the Belgian authorities, and vice versa. The Belgian Minister of Defence would give the order over Belgium and the Dutch Minister of Security and Justice would give the order to a Belgian pilot over the Netherlands. In such circumstances, one government is unable to veto the actions of their own pilots when commanded by the other. Operational command of a particular asset is thus ceded to another state. Officials are aware that such arrangements run against the grain of established notions of military force and sovereignty. As a Dutch official remarks,

'It is pushing the boundaries on sovereignty because we basically give the authority to Belgians to use our fighter aircraft to use lethal force for a major event without the possibility of a direct veto by the Dutch authorities.' (Interview 24: June 2016).

Belgian officials agree, and argue that such thinking may be typical of future agreements, where 'by exploring new fields and areas for cooperation we are reaching those limits of sovereignty.' (Interview 16: June 2014)

The new arrangement will produce significant efficiencies for both states. It will increase the number of jets available for deployment thus increasing flexibility. This is particularly important because both the Netherlands and Belgium will soon replace their F16s with fewer F35s or similar, and will therefore be operating smaller fleets of aircraft<sup>43</sup>. Joint air-policing goes some way to mitigating the effects of the 2011 defence cuts on Dutch air power. As a Dutch official describes,

'This arrangement is very advantageous to us because we are going to buy 37 F35 fighters whereas we now have over 60 F16s; we had over 200 during the Cold War. You need a substantial number of those planes and the pilots to maintain this 24/7

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<sup>43</sup> At the time of writing, Belgium has not yet decided on the aircraft that will replace the F16.

arrangement. You need several for training, which means some permanently in the US. What it comes down to is that if you don't have this arrangement with the Belgians then for international operations you can have four aircraft and they can each fly one mission a day, which is not very much. Now with this arrangement it does not just double capacity but you can have multiple missions a day so it improves your output for multinational missions' (Interview 24: June 2016).

A former senior Dutch air force officer confirms that the air policing cooperation will allow the Netherlands to maintain its role in international operations,

'We already shared a common picture of airspace. The big step was to share responsibility for a renegade situation. That is a big step. And that cooperation means that we will have something available for crisis management operations' (Interview 22: September 2016).

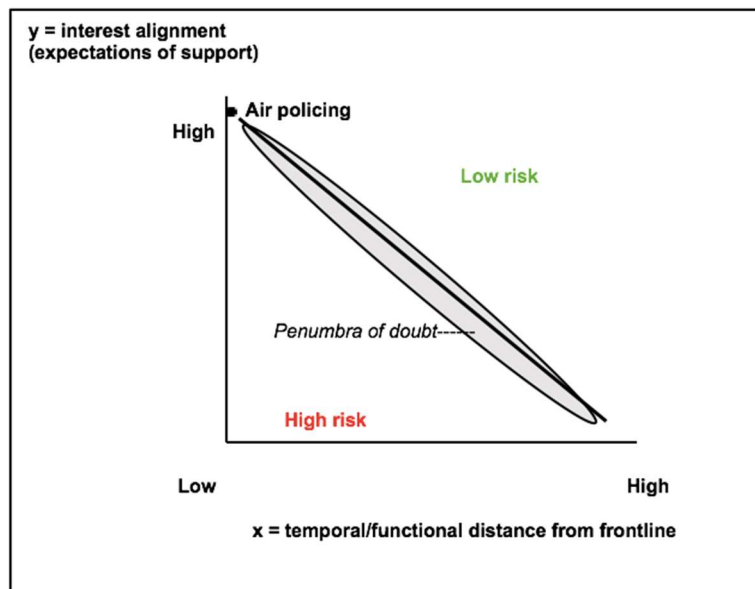
According to the definition of mutualisation used in this thesis, joint-air policing is a form of sharing, although it does not require the physical sharing of equipment, nor indeed for the equipment to be absolutely identical, only to have the same capability to achieve the task. A Dutch official argues that, 'It's a kind of pooling and sharing because we use each other's capabilities on a rotational basis' (Interview 24, June 2016). There is a symmetrical mutual dependence at the heart of the cooperation, and the reliance on the capability of the partner is absolute. How is it possible then that the Netherlands and Belgium can mutualise such a 'frontline' capability?

The hypothesis drawn from the model is that capability mutualisation may occur at zero temporal distance from the frontline when there is very high certainty of support for concrete interests. In this case, the strategic end of autonomous control over the defence of territory is identical, as are the concrete interests that fall underneath that end, such as the protection of civilian lives and economic interests<sup>44</sup>. The temporal distance of mutualisation from the frontline is zero; and, because the interests are near-identical, the functional and temporal deployment of the capabilities can also be identical. This can be illustrated in figure 5.6. Another important aspect of this form of

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<sup>44</sup> Clearly, the economic and security interests at risk from a 'renegade' attack are not physically identical in Belgium and the Netherlands, but an attack would likely be of similar magnitude in either state.

mutualisation is that fighter jets can be expected to be permanently assigned to this task, a rare occurrence for military capability, but one that adds to the mutual confidence between the parties, i.e., that territorial defence is not an 'optional extra'.



**Figure 5.6. Air policing distance from frontline**

There is, then, no structural-relational pressure for Belgium and the Netherlands to create such a critical interdependence over air-policing, other than the more general pressures for greater efficiency explored in the previous section. Yet it is also the case that structural-relational conditions enable them to do so with very little risk. One paradox, however, and one that challenges some conceptions of state sovereignty, is that the strategic end of autonomous capability for the defence of territory is now maintained through mutual dependence on another state. For the reasons described above, however, it is not regarded as problematic; neither was the arrangement deemed politically controversial in the Netherlands or Belgium (Interview 24: June 2016).

#### *Approaching the frontline - risk for efficiency*

The forms of cooperation considered above can be described as low risk because the chances of an entrapment-abandonment dilemma are very low. There are, however, 'grey areas' where the level of risk is higher but deemed to be worth taking.

While partners may believe it likely that concrete interests will be closely aligned, it is also the case that due to low interdependence they may not always be so. In such cases, risk is mitigated by a degree of temporal or functional distance from the frontline, but to a far lesser extent than, for example, that of defence industrial cooperation. The following hypothesis is taken from the model:

H3: Capability mutualisation may be found at functional distance from the frontline, with or without high certainty of support for concrete interests.

#### i. Naval cooperation

Dutch-Belgian naval cooperation, or BENESAM, began in 1948 when the two states made a secret agreement to put their navies under joint command in case of war. Throughout the 1950s there were staff-level discussions and joint exercises. Collaboration over MCM capabilities began in the 1950s, and a joint school was set up in 1966. As noted, the same MCM vessels were acquired with France in the 1970s and 1980s. During the Cold War, Belgium and the Netherlands made up BENECHAN, a regional sub-group of NATO's Allied Command Channel (ACCHAN), which was responsible for ensuring allied access to Dutch and Belgian ports. At times of war, BENECHAN would become a single bi-national command under a Dutch admiral with a Belgian deputy (Interview 25, June 2014).

Following the end of the Cold War, Belgium and the Netherlands significantly drew down the scale of their armed forces but opted to retain a broad spectrum of capabilities. The BENECHAN arrangements provided the basis for a major agreement in 1994 that was intended to lay the groundwork for deep efficiency savings through bilateral cooperation. BENECHAN would provide the basis for the eventual establishment of Admiral BENELUX, which in 1996 became an integrated peacetime bi-national command. Parrein notes that the end of the Cold War provided the shock to kick-start the cooperation, but that it was also built on previous Cold War initiatives (Parrein, 2011: 114). As a senior Belgian naval officer notes, 'When you appreciate that the future of your own navy is at stake because budgets and personnel are being reduced, well there's only one solution - to work together' (Interview 25: June 2014). Admiral BENELUX provides a bi-national command but

Belgium and the Netherlands retain the ability to command autonomous national operations within its structure. As a senior naval officer explains,

'We take all decisions autonomously. All decisions are respected and supported by the staff. Whatever direction one or the other wants to go it is supported by the other. We are free to decide to do things separately or in common. But the organisation is such that we can support either together or apart. The only exception is when the Dutch conduct a national operation with special forces or submarines. But day-to-day operations are supported by a bi-national staff.' (Interview 25: June 2014)

Zandee et al point out that the major significance of Admiral Benelux lies in the 'workup and training aspects' around which planning is aligned, and note that 'So far, ABNL has not commanded combined Belgian-Netherlands deployments.' (Zandee et al, 2016: 43) As Parrein points out, however, in practice even national commands now rely to a degree on shared resources and personnel from the partner state (Parrein, 2011a: 71). Thus, he has concluded that,

'even for strictly national operations some people from the other country are responsible for some operational aspects. Up to now, this situation hasn't led to political difficulties.' (Parrein: 2011b: 25).

Admiral Benelux is therefore a highly integrated approach to the running of the two navies, to the extent that it is questionable as to whether even an 'autonomous' Dutch or Belgian operation can be described as such. Nevertheless, the political decision-making and most crucial elements of operational command still reside with the states themselves.

The increasing depth of the naval cooperation has been driven by a continuing search for efficiency and the confidence built on long-standing cooperation. It is built on decades of agreements and close cooperation to overcome technical barriers. As one senior Belgian officer observes,



'It is a growing process that takes time and that was facilitated by some events in operations, logistics, materiel, personnel and meant that at a certain time we can go further' (Interview 24: June 2014).

And, while the relationship was initially more critical to the viability of the capabilities of the smaller Belgian navy, a senior naval officer argues that the relationship is now one of mutual dependence,

'In 2014 the situation is completely different because the Dutch Navy cannot survive without the Belgian Navy. They are now in the situation that we were in twenty years ago. There's much more of a win-win situation in balance than it was many years ago' (Interview 25: June 2014).

Mutual dependencies have increased as support functions have become increasingly specialised. Specialisation has occurred within the lines of capability development of the capabilities of the MCM vessels and M-class frigates. These can be conceptualised as occurring at various degrees of temporal remove from the frontline, with training and infrastructure cooperation quite far removed. A critical decision, however, was the relatively recent move towards specialisation within the maintenance of their ships, as this moves the cooperation considerably closer to the frontline.

The critical development that enabled this shift was the acquisition by Belgium of two Dutch 'Karel Doorman' or 'M-class' multipurpose frigates in 2005. This meant that the two navies now shared two of the same ship types, the MCM vessels and the multipurpose frigates. Having the same frigates offered further opportunities for cooperation for the rationalisation of support to their ships. In 2006, the two states signed a Material-Logistics Agreement (MATLOG), through which the Netherlands became the 'lead nation' for the maintenance and logistics of the frigates and Belgium the 'lead nation' for MCM vessels (Parrein, 2011: 86)<sup>45</sup>. Differences in the technical configurations of the respective Dutch and Belgian versions of these ships

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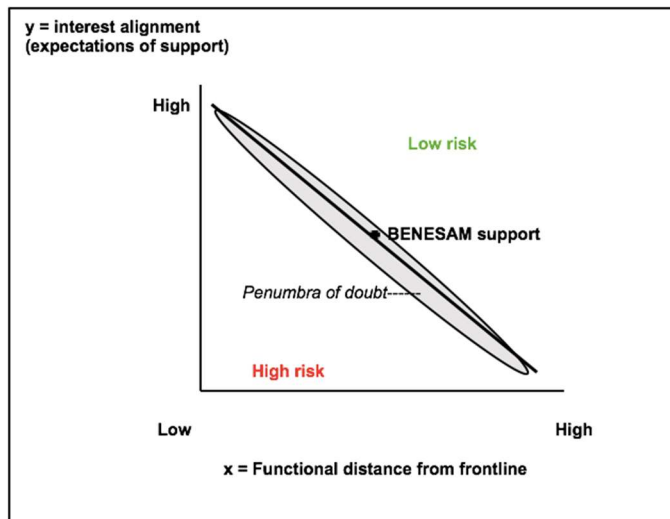
<sup>45</sup> This initially proved difficult because although Belgium and the Netherlands shared the same MCM vessels, they were equipped with different sub-systems. They also had different frigates until the Belgian purchase of two Karel Doorman class frigates in 2005, which were refitted for service in 2007-08. Both ship types and systems are now closely aligned (Zandee et al, 2016).

were then gradually removed through joint modernisation programmes, and since 2008, there have been moves towards common holdings of ammunition for the ships (Parrein, 2011a: 89).

The possibility for the further mutualisation of elements of their naval capabilities, however, can be viewed as introducing further risk into the relationship. For naval capabilities, most support will be carried out at a temporal and spatial distance from the frontline, i.e. at a naval base. As Biscop notes, where navies are concerned there may be less risk than for land forces because 'the only thing that gets deployed is the ship, the support doesn't move.' (Interview 14: June 2016) It is the case, however, that there may be occasions when Belgian or Dutch support personnel would need to assist the ship directly on an ongoing operation (Zandee et al, 2016: 44). As Parrein notes, 'National operational control does not mean that Belgian and Dutch units do not support each other in the field.' (Parrein, 2011a: 72).

This brings the level of mutual dependence far closer to the operational frontline, both temporally and spatially, as can be seen in figure 5.7. With mutual dependence present in such a critical aspect of the capability and with such close temporal proximity to an operation, there are potentially serious political ramifications. As Zandee et al argue, there are potentially scenarios in which political differences 'could create serious difficulties' including potentially the refusal of one state to send maintenance support to the other (Zandee, et al, 2016: 44). The arrangement clearly presents an erosion of the autonomy of Dutch and Belgian naval capabilities. For three reasons, however, there is apparently little concern among officials and officers. The first regards the high expectation of shared concrete interests between the two states. Senior officers believe that common interests are sufficiently well-aligned,

'We have Rotterdam and Antwerp, two big harbours, we have a big merchant navy in Belgium and in the Netherlands. We are two open economies so we share the same interests and therefore we engage our navies based on the same arguments.' (Interview 25: June 2014).



**Figure 5.7. Naval ship support distance from frontline**

As with the defence of territorial airspace, the shared strategic end of autonomous territorial defence of their ports and other very similar interests provide an important alignment that underpins mutual confidence. So too does the shared strategic end of a 'struggle for influence' and thus the kinds of operations the two states are likely to be involved with. The second reason for confidence is that although the temporal distance from the frontline could on occasion be reduced to almost zero - in the case that mission critical support must be provided to a ship on an ongoing operation - there is also a spatial-functional distance from the frontline that further reduces risk. Providing urgent maintenance to a ship is not the same as authorising a ship to engage in hostilities with an enemy. The function also usually, though not always, means that there is a spatial distance from the frontline. And the capability functions of MCM vessels and frigates are not necessarily the hardest edge of warfighting capability. As a former senior Dutch officer argues,

'With all respect to the Navy, ships on the sea are very different from soldiers on the ground, particularly as perceived from parliament. Soldiers on the ground become hampered by hundreds of different caveats.' (Interview 22: September 2016).

The lesser risk associated with naval capabilities stems partly from the nature of the contemporary conflicts NATO states have been involved with, and for which the risk to land-based personnel has been far higher than that for those at sea. Given the

evolution of threats and tactics, there is no guarantee that such a situation will always prevail. Nevertheless, even if risks to personnel may be lower in such a scenario, the potential for political embarrassment remains. In such a situation, the pressure will be on the supporting partner that disagrees with the mission to assist. Failure to do so would throw their cooperative arrangements into a deep diplomatic crisis and endanger their own future support. As with UK-France missile cooperation, the tendency in such arrangements is towards entrapment, but one of political embarrassment rather than any serious conflict of interest.

Thus, although Zandee et al are correct in principle that one could abandon the other, it seems highly unlikely that either state would regard its political opposition to a military mission as more important than an agreement that is vital to the functioning of its navy. Although such a political decision is impossible to predict with any certainty, the logic of the relationship would suggest that in such circumstances, the highest likelihood would be that the objecting state would have to suffer entrapment rather than run the risks of abandoning a partner. Yet due to the likelihood of shared interests and the flexibility that comes from not having to commit to the same operation that senior officials appear confident in the relationship. Even where one party carried out a mission and the other did not, officials struggled to envisage such a scenario where the supporting party would abandon the other (Interview 25: June 2014; Interview 17: June, 2016). Thus, in line with the model presented in this thesis, there does appear to be a degree of flexibility in part because the absolute alignment of interests is not necessary for this form of cooperation. On the other hand, such cooperation clearly entails greater risks than would a wholly autonomous capability, and this is expressed in the penumbra of doubt in figure 5.7.

Regarding the efficiencies generated from BENESAM cooperation, there is no precise method of accounting for them. Neither are the navies involved particularly keen to do this, as their primary concern is the preservation of capabilities, not saving money. A senior Belgian naval officer does, however, provide the following assessment of BENESAM as a means by which to increase the efficiency of naval capabilities,

'In 1990 the Belgian navy consisted of four frigates, two command and support ships, ten mine hunters and a few smaller ships. We were deployed in the Adriatic and the Gulf. In 2014 we have two frigates, six minehunters and one command ship. So, in 25 years we have reduced the Navy by 50% but still the Belgian politicians have the same options to deploy their naval assets. Not in the same way, not the same amount, but still we are present with MCM, along the coast of Africa, in Europe' (Interview 25: June 2014).

Moreover, this deep form of cooperation with the Netherlands has enabled Belgium to continue to meet the strategic end of the struggle for influence. As a senior naval officer argues,

'You still have a navy which is relevant. Showing the Belgian flag in all the theatres, which puts the Belgian politicians in international fora, with a comfortable chair in fact. That is the benefit of this kind of cooperation. And, of course, we have reduced the people from 4000 to 1600, so you no longer have to pay 2400 people, and we are still capable of doing what we can' (Interview 25: June 2014).

Belgian officers believe that BENESAM cooperation has now however reached a logical conclusion in terms of specialisation, at least under current constraints. As a senior naval officer argues,

'We are now at the level when you reach the critical mass to maintain the knowledge, training and know-how. We can't go further than this except if you have one BENESAM flag, and a Belgian-Dutch crew etc. This is impossible because of legal, political views. We are politically not ready at all for that kind of step. And at this stage there is no will, neither from Belgium nor the Dutch navy' (Interview 25: June 2014).

Neither is there any appetite for the specialisation of whole naval capabilities. A senior Belgian naval officer echoes the concerns that other interviewees for this thesis have highlighted regarding the need for flexibility and the provision of options for decision-makers,

'If you went for full specialisation you would remove options from the politicians. If Belgium did mine-hunting and the Netherlands did frigates that would imply that the Belgians would supply mine-hunters in support of Dutch ships, and we are not there yet.' (Interview 25: June 2014).

When considering how specialisation for support to MCM vessels and M-class frigates came to be, it is worth pointing out that the events leading to such an arrangement were quite haphazard. While the potential benefits from sharing ship types was well understood, Belgium sought at one point to acquire frigates from the UK, and the Netherlands may have found other buyers, both of which would have seriously undermined the potential for cooperation (Parrein, 2011: 74). Thus, the explanation provided here is not so much concerned with the actual historical outcome itself, but rather with the question as to how such a deep level of cooperation is at all possible.

The form of cooperation outlined above, which can be described as specialisation within the lines of development of a given capability but with a balanced and broadly equivalent trade-off (i.e., Dutch support for frigates, Belgian support for MCM vessels), provides greater efficiency in meeting the strategic ends of the partner states than a national solution. It does so while retaining the political flexibility that the low interdependence of the asymmetric alliance allows for its members. It avoids acute entrapment-abandonment risks, although it is not entirely risk free, and if anything, tends towards a risk of entrapment. It is possible to conceive of situations, however unlikely, in which states must contribute military support to operations that they do not regard to be in their interests. Given, however, that decision-makers believe the choice is one between losing an entire capability and having one that is less than fully autonomous but without considerable political risk, then the decision to cooperate is wholly 'rational' and in line with the model outlined in this thesis.

The cooperation reflects the alignment of strategic ends and the concrete interests that are instrumental to those ends, which are very similar. This can be seen in the interest in the protection of major ports, trading routes and the 'struggle for influence' within the alliance. BENESAM cooperation also demonstrates a high level of

mutuality in almost every aspect of cooperation, which is finely balanced between the two parties. A senior Belgian officer explains that,

'We keep a sort of balance of what is happening from the navy point of view. We keep a balance on material, education, the number of Belgians in Den Helder is about 25, same with Dutch in Belgium. We don't think about investing here and there for material and infrastructure. There is an adult trust, where we don't really want to make the financials balance, we have the feeling that for the moment it's break even for the two navies' (Interview 25, June 2014).

This leads to a high level of mutual dependence, 'If you remove one capacity from one country, the other will fall because we no longer have the expertise to sustain that capacity' (Interview 25: June 2014). And Parrein argues that while it is not impossible that either could go back to fully national capabilities, it would come at considerable temporal and financial cost (Parrein, 2011a: 157).

Finally, it should be noted that BENESAM is categorised by some as a form of 'task specialisation' (Parrein, 2011a; Zandee et al, 2016: 44). The capabilities are 'mutualised' in that they require both states' input to function, but the mutual dependence itself is not *within* the capability, as it would be when sharing a particular fixed asset, but rather it cuts across the capabilities offered by two quite different ships. In this sense, it is the completely equal and high risk of abandonment that makes the cooperation quite robust. And, together with the close alignment of strategic ends and concrete interests the politico-military risks of cooperation are deemed to be low. The foregoing section thus provides a theoretical explanation as to how it is that Belgium and the Netherlands have successfully worked around the issues of autonomy to create mutual dependencies that deliver significant efficiencies.

## *Conclusion*

In terms of the mutualisation of military capabilities, the relationship between Belgium and the Netherlands is perhaps the most advanced between any two European states, certainly in the air and maritime domains. It has been seen that

there is significant cooperation between them across the whole range of capability mutualisation arrangements as defined by this thesis. In terms of temporal mutualisation, the two have a longstanding relationship including the acquisition of the tripartite minehunters in the 1970s. This temporal mutualisation will continue at a more advanced level into the future as both states will acquire the same minehunters and multipurpose frigates. Because the two navies have established such deep cooperation, they now require essentially identical capabilities to be able to continue their cooperation.

Dutch-Belgian naval cooperation also demonstrates the possibility of mutualising elements of a capability at functional distance from the frontline, and achieving considerable efficiencies in doing so. Through specialisation of support to their frigates and MCM vessels the two states effectively halve an expensive element of their capabilities. This specialisation is achieved, however, in a novel way. The capabilities offered by frigates and MCM vessels are in isolation mutualised through dependence, not mutual dependence. The mutual dependence occurs across the capabilities taken together, not in isolation. Thus, the efficiency benefits of specialisation are taken without compromising on a breadth of capabilities and political flexibility. Finally, Dutch-Belgian cooperation also provides a rare example of 'frontline' capability mutualisation in the form of an agreement to share air defence responsibilities. As noted by interviewees, this arrangement pushes at the boundaries of accepted notions of state sovereignty, and yet the efficiencies involved allow both states to continue to offer air power to NATO and other international coalitions.

While the Netherlands and Belgium are relatively small states in Europe, it has been shown that they attempt to pursue their strategic ends in largely the same way as larger states such as the UK and France. And, while they share some cultural similarities with each other through geographical proximity, they are susceptible to the same structural-relational dilemmas as the UK and France, as can be seen in the divergent positions that both states have taken over support for US operations, particularly those in Iraq in 2003. And, as made clear by interviewees, both retain significant red lines over authorisation for the use of their forces and the related limits of defence cooperation. It should not, therefore, be assumed that the advanced



nature of capability mutualisation between the Netherlands and Belgium is caused by their internal idiosyncrasies. Rather, these two states find themselves on the frontline of the economic and strategic pressures identified in the second sections of the case studies in this thesis. They are, in response, finding new ways to improve efficiency while maintaining the ability to meet their strategic ends.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **GERMANY AND THE NETHERLANDS: THE 2013 *DECLARATION OF INTENT* (2008-2013)**

#### **i. Introduction**

Defence cooperation between the Netherlands and Germany dates back to the Cold War when the 1<sup>st</sup> (Netherlands) Corps and 1<sup>st</sup> (West Germany) Corps were stationed alongside each other in northern Germany. This shared geographical location encouraged cooperation on logistics and training, which was also facilitated by common equipment. Cooperation was given a further push following the end of the Cold War when the need to rationalise NATO's shrinking force structures led to the development of a single binational army corps headquarters, the 1 (German/Netherlands) Corps. In part because of this historical cooperation, today Germany and the Netherlands share perhaps the closest bilateral army relationship in Europe. There are, however, some important differences between Dutch-German cooperation and that of the previous two case studies. The first is an obvious asymmetry of scale between the two parties. It will be seen that while asymmetry of scale does not in itself undermine the logic of capability mutualisation as developed in this thesis, it does have a material impact on the likelihood of some forms of cooperation, particularly in the defence industrial field.

A second important difference from the previous two case studies is that Germany has a starkly different historical experience from its European allies with regards to the role of the military instrument in its foreign policy and its place in wider society. Germany's actions and experiences in the Second World War, and the subsequent development of its post-war foreign and defence policies have left a markedly different attitude to military force, which is clearly apparent in Germany's approach to the generation and use of its military capabilities. It will be argued, however, that despite this unique history, the strategic ends that Germany pursues remain broadly like those of the other states considered in this thesis. And, while Germany has often chosen to use its military means to support its strategic ends in different ways from its allies, the difference has become increasingly slight in the post-Cold War world.

As with the other states under consideration in this thesis, Germany has also faced the problem of a 'flat-in-real-terms' defence budget, which has failed to keep pace with the escalating cost of generating and deploying military capability. By comparison with the states considered above, however, the 2008 financial crisis did not have such a negative impact on the German fiscal position. While the overall defence investment picture remained highly constrained, Germany thus faced far less immediate pressure on the viability of its capabilities. By contrast, as explored in the previous chapter, the financial crisis had a major impact on the Netherlands' ability to finance its military capabilities and this played the central role in the subsequent push towards deeper military cooperation with Germany. For Germany, the imperative for cooperation was partly political as well as financial, in part as a response to the new alignment between France and the UK at Lancaster House, and as a demonstration to the US and other allies that Germany would help NATO and the EU to sustain military capabilities by cooperating to achieve a more efficient allocation of resources.

As with the previous case studies, the first section seeks to demonstrate how the asymmetric alliance configuration shapes the strategic ends that subordinate states pursue, for which military capabilities provide a crucial means. As with previous chapters, this will focus on the logic of behaviour in the post-war period up to the broadly contemporary period. The second section focuses on the period from around the 2008 financial crisis up to the agreement of the 2013 German-Netherlands *Declaration of Intent on the Further Enhancement of Bilateral Relations in the Field of Defence* (Netherlands Government, 2013), and attempts to explain how a crisis in the viability of means-ends strategies pushed Germany and the Netherlands towards seeking greater efficiency in the generation and deployment of their military capabilities through defence cooperation, including the mutualisation of capability.

As with previous case studies, the narrative will consider a selection of cases from the concrete initiatives agreed by the parties. And, as with other cases, it will be seen that some elements of these initiatives have their origins in the post-Cold War period before the 2008 financial crisis. It will be argued, however, that such initiatives reflect the same broadly contemporary challenges around the affordability of military

capability. The aim here is to use the explanatory model of capability mutualisation to show how structural-relational variables provide a constraining and enabling context that shapes the form of capability mutualisation initiatives, and hence the possibility for greater efficiency through cooperation. The focus is thus on demonstrating how it has been possible for Germany and the Netherlands to create mutual dependencies in their capability despite the constraints on autonomy that this entails.

## **ii. The logic of behaviour: the strategic ends of Germany under an asymmetric alliance**

### *Germany – the path to ‘Westbindung’*

According to historian John Breuilly the formation of the first German nation-state in 1871 was viewed positively by contemporary opinion. It represented a shift away from the statelets and multinational dynasties of the past and ‘towards the fashioning of a Europe made up of constitutional nation states’, and thus towards a more modern future (Breuilly, 1996: 1). In retrospect, however, the arrival of the German state is more often viewed as an ominous portent of the collapse of a European balance of power that had held since the Napoleonic wars (Breuilly, 1996: Kundnani, 2011: 31). As AJP Taylor argued,

‘Ever since the defeat of the French revolution Europe had conducted its affairs merely by adjusting the claims of sovereign states against each other as they arose. In 1914 Germany had felt strong enough to challenge this system and had aimed to substitute her hegemony over the rest’ (Taylor, 1988: 568).

The increasingly uneasy peace that followed Germany’s formation was shattered by the First World War, which set in train over thirty years of political crises and cataclysmic change across Europe. This period of conflict culminated in the unconditional surrender of Germany in 1945 and the partition of Europe into territory dominated by the new superpowers, the US and the Soviet Union and their smaller allies. Germany itself was divided in two, with its east and west and former capital Berlin turned into microcosms of the new bipolar world. 1945 also represented a kind

of 'year zero' for West German politics and society, with a clear rejection of its militaristic past deemed necessary but its future approach to security unclear (Kershaw, 2015: 170). Under allied occupation for the following decade, the political entity that would become the Federal Republic of Germany gradually reclaimed its lost sovereignty and moved to completely redefine its foreign and defence policy<sup>46</sup>.

### *The struggle for influence – mitigating entrapment*

In the aftermath of the Second World War, the allied powers faced a new and different 'German problem': what role should West Germany be allowed to play in the defence of Western Europe? The outbreak of war in Korea in 1950 had heightened fears that the Soviet Union might make an aggressive move in Europe while allied attention and resources were diverted elsewhere. As relations deteriorated rapidly between the western allies and the Soviet Union, the US and UK increasingly saw a need to rearm West Germany as a bulwark against potential Soviet aggression. Yet the prospect of German rearmament prompted deep concerns in France, understandably so given the history of catastrophic military confrontation between the two. The first attempt to find a solution came from French Defence Minister René Pleven in October 1950. The Pleven Plan proposed a European Defence Community that would bind West Germany's military into a supranational European structure (Fursdon, 1980). By 1954, however, the proposals had been rejected by French parliamentarians as overly restrictive of French military autonomy. New British commitments through the Western European Union (WEU) to permanently maintain substantial forces in Germany helped to persuade the French that renewed German military power would be contained by the wider alliance (Macmillan, 1969: 482). Thus, France eventually accepted West German NATO membership as the only plausible answer to the rearmament question. But West Germany neither sought, nor would it be allowed, a military instrument comparable with its major NATO allies.

The terms for allied recognition of the West German state were set out in the 1954 *Final Act of the London Conference* (NATO, 2001). The treaty ended the occupation

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<sup>46</sup> The historical section of this chapter will focus on the experience of West Germany during the Cold War period.

by allied forces and provided elements of the sovereignty and equality that West German leaders had sought since 1949, including accession to NATO and the WEU. Heavy constraints on West Germany's armed forces were, however, also made central to the agreement. West Germany's 1949 constitution had already limited the role of the German armed forces solely to 'defence' (Bundestag, 2012: Article 87a). Under the *Final Act*, Germany pledged not to develop atomic, chemical or biological weaponry, long-range missiles, strategic bomber aircraft and certain classes of warship (NATO, 2001: II,15). The *Final Act* also made it clear that forces allocated to NATO could not be used for any other purpose unless specifically agreed between member states (IV, a). Since Germany's military was to be used only in self-defence, this left little space for any other strategic use. As Johannes Bohnen has argued,

'In essence, NATO itself was Germany's defence policy, since the defence of Germany formed the core of the common defence, a fact most clearly illustrated by the Bundeswehr, whose decentralised structure was symbolised by the absence of a general staff. In contrast to their British and French counterparts, German generals could plan military strategy only within NATO.' (Bohnen, 1997: 56).

These fundamental constraints on the use of military force left West Germany in a unique position among its NATO contemporaries; its defence policy was constrained within a multilateral framework. Yet while in this sense West Germany was constrained by its circumstances and commitments, in another sense it also derived considerable influence from its very weakness and geographical vulnerability on the Cold War frontline. As Patrick Keller notes,

'Almost all scenarios of war between NATO and the Soviet Union played out on (Western) German territory, and after Germany's accession to NATO in 1955 the Bundeswehr was always a crucial factor in the West's response planning to possible Soviet aggression' (Keller, 2012: 98).

Thus, from the American and British policy of supporting a rearmed West Germany, it could derive a high level of influence from its weakness. West Germany's first Chancellor, Konrad Adenauer, was able to link allied acceptance of rearmament with the restoration of sovereignty, and use the new military commitment as a means to

exert further influence over the US (Grunbacher, 2010: 157). Indeed, as noted above, the *Final Act* linked the formal recognition of West German sovereignty with an agreement on the shape and terms of rearmament.

1955 saw the launch of the new West German armed forces or *Bundeswehr*, which were focussed almost exclusively on territorial defence from Soviet attack. The *Bundesmarine* (West German navy) was denied power projection capabilities such as aircraft carriers and amphibious assault vessels and was 'limited to coastal defence (including mine warfare, submarine operations, and air defence) in the North Sea and the Baltic Sea.' (Bruns, 2016). West German land forces, however, came to make a substantial military contribution to NATO, particularly to the implementation of the 'forward defence' and 'flexible response' doctrines, which from the 1960s onwards required a high density of conventional forces to be permanently deployed on West German territory (Stein, 1990). With its three Army corps and twelve divisions, West Germany maintained more conventional forces on its territory than any other NATO member, including the US.

Like its counterparts considered above, West Germany thus built a role as a dependable ally for the US, providing significant conventional military forces to NATO. Unlike the UK and France, however, West Germany did not face the dilemmas of allocating military resources to non-NATO 'out of area' operations in pursuit of its own idiosyncratic interests. As a latecomer to colonial conquest and the defeated party in two world wars, West Germany did not inherit a post-war retreat from empire with the concomitant military burden. Moreover, West Germany's constitutional restrictions meant that it would likely have been heavily restricted in its ability to use force in connection with overseas interests.

Indeed, history and unique constitutional arrangements also gave West Germany an element of protection from entrapment in US interests pursued 'out of area'. The constitutional commitment to use military force solely for self-defence provided, for example, a strong legal argument for resisting the pressure from President Lyndon Johnson's administration to send troops to Vietnam in the 1960s (Blang, 2004). Despite private misgivings over the wisdom of the intervention and considerable public opposition, West Germany remained outwardly loyal to the US over Vietnam

and responded to White House demands to make 'offset' investments in American military equipment to compensate the US for the role of its overstretched forces in defending West Germany (Zimmermann, 2003: 60). Yet despite American requests, no direct military contribution was provided. As Eugénie Blang argues, West Germany 'supported Washington's Vietnam policy only because they believed that it would be detrimental to German interests to criticize America openly' (Blang, 2004: 346).

There were other significant policy tensions between West Germany and the US in the first decades of the Cold War, including Adenauer's move towards De Gaulle with the Franco-German Élysée Treaty of 1963 and the pursuit of reunification through Chancellor Willy Brandt's controversial *Ostpolitik* policy of outreach to East Germany. Through these diplomatic initiatives West Germany used the political autonomy it had acquired to further mitigate the risk of entrapment into US policies, build flexibility for greater political manoeuvre and develop its own foreign policy and reunification goals. Adenauer, for example, could use his relationship with De Gaulle to draw on French diplomatic clout as a hedge against American policies with which West Germany disagreed (Kissinger, 1965: 205). Against this diplomatic context, West Germany's military contribution to NATO was an important source of influence, though perhaps not so great as that of its geostrategic importance to the US and its relations with its neighbours, particularly France and East Germany. As Henry Kissinger remarked in a 1965 study of NATO, West Germany could draw on a 'bargaining position conferred on it by its central position' (Kissinger, 1965: 206). These factors, regardless of the scale of West Germany's military contribution to NATO, would always ensure attention from Washington.

Throughout the Cold War, West Germany's interest in defence against the Soviet Union was in clear alignment with the other member states of the NATO alliance. The risk of a conflict of idiosyncratic German interests with its allies, at least in relation to military matters, was of no consequence, because West Germany lacked the kinds of overseas territorial and political interests that concerned the UK and France. And the political and legal restrictions placed on its armed forces served to remove both the threat and opportunity of military involvement with American interests out of the NATO area. At the same time, however, West Germany's vital



geostrategic position and its ability to use relations with France, East Germany and the Soviet Union via European integration and the policy of *Ostpolitik* demonstrated that it had considerable flexibility in pursuing its strategic ends. In this sense, the role of military capabilities in supporting West Germany's struggle for influence over the US was, by comparison with other states in this thesis, important but perhaps not so critical to strategy.

The profound changes to the international system that began in 1989 led some neorealist scholars at the time to raise the prospect of a re-emergence of the 'German problem' for the European balance of power (Mearsheimer, 1990; Kundnani, 2011). For some, neorealist theory indicated that the end of bipolarity would necessarily push Germany towards a more 'normal' and thus more 'autonomy-maximising' and 'self-interested' foreign policy (Baumann et al, 2001; Duffield, 1999). John Duffield, for example, argued that neorealists could expect German policy in the post-Cold War period to have become more classically 'realist' in approach and thus,

'characterised by increased unilateralism and assertiveness as Germany once again sought to play the role of a Great Power (Duffield, 1999: 767)'.

For Duffield, the fact that Germany did not take this path is best explained not by structural-relational factors, but by its unique history and the development of a political culture that was more in tune with the continued pursuit of multilateralism through cooperation with allies and international organisations. And there is certainly a strong logic in this proposition; Germany's political culture was surely set against any kind of push for 'maximising autonomy' through unilateralist policies and a complete rejection of the constraints of post-war multilateral institutions.

Yet, the point depends upon how the neorealist argument is deployed. Duffield assumes that the end of bipolarity implied new autonomy for European states. As the threat from the Soviet Union fell away, the UK and France might also have made bids for greater autonomy from the US. Yet there was no discernible appetite for such a dramatic shift in their policies either. If Germany appeared to have taken on a form of self-abnegation ill-suited to neorealist explanation, so too did Europe's other

large powers. The more compelling 'neorealist' explanation for Germany's behaviour is the one that runs through this entire thesis. It is that for Germany, as for other European states, the continued role of American power was welcome as it promised to suppress any risk of a return to military balancing in the region. If neorealism assumes that states are motivated by 'maximising autonomy', as Baumann et al (2001) have argued, then it may indeed be problematic for the theory, but there is no such assumption, not in Waltz's theory at least, nor that set out here. Rather, it is assumed that states seek security to preserve their survival in the form of the exercise of sovereignty-autonomy, but, as has been explained, this is wholly compatible with willingly-agreed constraints on concrete aspects of their autonomy.

Thus, the alternative explanation to that of the causal primacy of German strategic culture over this period is simply that the subordinate European NATO states *all* recognised that the alliance had considerable benefits for their security, even in the absence of any clear external threat. So long as the US offered to continue the arrangement, it was not beneficial for any of them, large or small, to seek 'greater autonomy' by pursuing more assertive unilateralism and threatening NATO. This is not to argue that cultural dispositions relating to the use of military force are causally irrelevant in explaining German behaviour in the aftermath of the Cold War. Quite the contrary, they are crucial, but they can be seen to support, rather than undermine, a structural-relational explanation.

Thus, rather than a collapse of NATO and the re-emergence of the 'German problem', there was instead a shift in alliance dynamics towards military contributions to 'out of area' operations led by the US. As with France, Germany had lost its influential position as a frontline state in the Cold War confrontation and needed new means by which to pursue its struggle for influence over the US. Following the end of the Cold War and reunification, German foreign and defence policy was thus at once newly liberated and newly constrained. While the geo-strategic constraint of a nation divided across the Cold War frontline was gone, 'normal' behaviour was increasingly expected by Germany's allies and indeed sought by German decision-makers keen to retain influence. This, however, entailed material support for US-led expeditionary operations. Here, Baumann and Hellmann have identified a tension between the

impact of the end of the Cold War and the continuing domestic constraints of a deeply imbedded culture of restraint regarding the use of force,

‘The structuralists are correct that the federal government was confronted with growing demands by its allies resulting from the structural changes after the end of the Cold War, on the one hand, and with existing domestic constraints created by an established anti-militarist political culture, on the other.’ (Baumann and Hellmann, 2001: 73)

This tension characterised the German response to demands from allies for expeditionary military support, which began almost immediately after reunification with the advent of the 1991 Gulf War. The US made a request to Chancellor Helmut Kohl’s government for military assistance in the 1991 Gulf War. Due to political and legal uncertainties over such a policy, however, contributions to the campaign did not extend to the provision of warfighting capabilities. Yet German decision-makers increasingly framed a new narrative on the use of military force based on the demonstration of wider ‘responsibility’ in the new era. As Baumann and Hellmann have noted,

‘Representatives of the Kohl government repeatedly argued that the unified Germany was expected by its partners to ‘take over more responsibility’ by contributing to international military operations.’ (Baumann and Hellmann, 2001: 71).

NATO interventions in Yugoslavia in the 1990s following the outbreak of civil war presented a dilemma for Germany. The case for deploying force for humanitarian assistance and peacekeeping was politically strong, particularly given Germany’s own history during the Nazi era, but there was deep uncertainty as to whether such operations were compliant with the constitution. Eventually a coalition of political parties forced a ruling, and in 1994 the German Constitutional Court declared that such actions were lawful, so long as they were approved by the Bundestag and undertaken from a collective security perspective (Baumann and Hellmann, 2001). Views on the use of force outside the context of territorial defence changed radically over a short space of time. In NATO’s 1999 Kosovo campaign the Bundestag authorised the use of force, and the Luftwaffe flew combat missions for the first time

in the history of the Federal Republic of Germany. During the Kosovo crisis Chancellor Gerhard Schröder had told US President Bill Clinton that Germany was ready to assume its responsibility as a 'normal ally', and support the US position (Baumann and Hellmann, 2001: 76). Similarly, when the US launched operations in Afghanistan following the '911' terror attacks he argued for strong support to the US,

'Schröder stressed the need for German foreign and security policy to be seen as consistent and in line with multilateralism, to be seen as a reliable ally, able and willing to make contributions to international security alongside allies and partners' (Buras and Longhurst, 2004: 233).

Thus, while the end of the Cold War may well have precipitated moves towards more 'out of area' or expeditionary operations, this thesis has argued that there was no concomitant shift in the strategic ends pursued by subordinate European states. Rather, as has been seen with regard to France in chapter four, the role of military capabilities in mitigating entrapment through a struggle for influence over the US shifted decisively away from territorial defence towards expeditionary operations. Germany thus had to prove its relevance to the US in new ways that may have been politically and constitutionally uncomfortable. And yet, as the actions of Chancellors Kohl and Schröder attest, Germany moved against the grain of its apparent cultural preferences surprisingly quickly, and indeed to a 'stunning' degree in Kosovo in 1999 (Baumann and Hellmann, 2001: 75).

Some scholars have argued that more recent military operations, particularly the Iraq War of 2003 and Libya in 2011, tell a different story. It has been argued that because Germany declined to take part in these operations it has turned its back on its tradition of steadfast loyalty both to the US and to the multilateralism embodied by NATO. Kundnani, for example, argues that German positions over Iraq and Afghanistan demonstrate that 'Germany no longer needs multilateral institutions in the way it used to.' (2011: 35) Germany's size and economic weight thus once more threaten to unbalance the international system. As Kundnani puts it, 'the 'German question' was resolved in geopolitical terms but has re-emerged in geo-economic form.' (2011: 43) Such a risk of a new German unbalancing of Europe has even

been highlighted by the UK MOD, though it does not identify Germany by name (MOD Global Strategic Trends: 119). This argument reprises that of earlier concerns over post-Cold War German power disparities in Europe and the proposition that such is the extent of German economic power that it need not contribute to NATO or US-led operations.

Yet Germany's 'unilateralism' over Iraq and Libya is not incompatible with behaviour within the asymmetric alliance configuration. Indeed, as has been shown, unilateralism is highly likely in an asymmetric alliance where rigidity of alignment leads to flexibility of policy. Neither has Germany been alone in declining to take part in out of area operations; France and others opposed the 2003 Iraq War, and even the UK was unable to support the US over Syria in 2013. All military interventions have become controversial in recent years across all NATO allies. Furthermore, if Germany were prepared to rely solely on its economic clout for influence then it might be expected that German military contributions would slide across all multilateral operations, including those for collective defence under NATO's Article 5. Instead, as scholars and analysts acknowledge, Germany has moved a very long way in quite a short space of time, particularly towards the provision of expeditionary capabilities to NATO. Germany's contribution in Afghanistan was significant and sustained, and it has more recently made forces available to play an important role in Mali. Furthermore, German elites remain convinced that Germany should do more rather than less in the military sphere (Keller, 104)<sup>47</sup>.

This commitment to a defence policy embedded within NATO and under US leadership remains Germany's official policy and has been reiterated in several policy documents. It was espoused in the 2006 defence and security white paper,

'The central goal of German foreign and security policy continues to be to shape the transatlantic partnership in the Alliance with the future in mind, and to cultivate the close and trusting relationship with the USA. Now and in the future, the fundamental issues of European security can be only addressed together with the USA' (German Government, 2006: 21).

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<sup>47</sup> While it is beyond the timeframe of this thesis, the most recent German security and defence White Paper published in 2016, also suggests a more important role for its armed forces in the future.

And in the Defence Policy Guidelines of 2011,

‘The North Atlantic Alliance remains the centrepiece of our defence efforts. Alliance solidarity and making a reliable and credible contribution to the Alliance are part of Germany’s *raison d’état*... The commitment of the United States to the security of Europe, as it is most prominently and effectively reflected in the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, remains a vital interest of Germany and its European allies.’  
(DPG, 2011: 6-7).

Thus, Germany continues to see American engagement in Europe as a ‘vital interest’ that must be preserved. And, as has been shown in the case study states considered in previous chapters, the form of Germany’s armed forces is shaped by the strategic end of the struggle for influence over the US. This is reflected in the balanced forces that Germany seeks to maintain, as is noted in the Defence Policy Guidelines of 2011,

‘By enabling the employment of armed forces across the entire intensity spectrum, Germany will be in a position to make an adequate political and military contribution in accordance with its size, thus ensuring its influence and, in particular, its say in planning and decisions’ (DPG, 2011: 9)

Thus, like the other states considered above, Germany also pursues the policy of balanced forces as the best means for influence. The German armed forces seek to maintain forces balanced across the services with a preference for ‘breadth rather than depth.’ The level of ambition is described in the 2012 IISS *Military Balance* as,

‘the ability to conduct the full spectrum of operations up to high-intensity combat, to be able to serve as a framework nation for multinational operations, and to be able to sustain up to 10,000 troops on international crisis-management operations.’ (IISS, 2012: 80)

There is, however, an undoubted reticence to use military force, which can best be explained by considering Germany’s unique political culture, and this has

ramifications on the form and use of its military capabilities. Yet Germany does use and shape the military instrument to exert influence in broadly the same way as the other states in this study. As one senior German officer puts it,

‘We are not the British and we do not follow the US on every adventure and they know it. On the other hand, they know what we are able to do’ (Interview 29, June 2015).

And, regarding Germany’s apparent unilateralism over Libya, it has been argued that such unilateralism is well accounted for by the structural-relational configuration; in common with other European allies, it is unsurprising that Germany will use this high flexibility to shape its military contributions, if any, to military missions led by the US or others. And while German influence in Europe continues to grow, and is one means for Germany to meet its strategic end of a struggle influence, the military instrument remains a vital means of influence over the US and its pursuit of its interests. And it is one that remains for Germany firmly fixed in a multinational perspective. The policy of *westbindung*, through which West Germany integrated itself decisively into Western institutions under American security leadership, remained and remains at the time of writing, a foundation of contemporary German foreign and defence policy.

### *Hedging against abandonment*

In the early post-war years, Germany was largely reliant on the US for its military equipment. As its economy grew more sophisticated, however, Germany began to develop its own tanks and armoured vehicles and joined with the UK and other European partners in the multinational Tornado and subsequent Typhoon fighter jet programmes. As such, in most high-tech areas of defence industrial production, Germany has not been self-sufficient on an exclusively national basis since the Second World War. The shift towards domestic production and multinational collaboration is perhaps best seen as a move to reap the industrial and economic advantages of indigenous capacity, rather than to develop autonomy for strategic ends, whether as a hedge or to underpin operational autonomy. There is little evidence that Germany has viewed its defence industry as a foundation for

autonomous action in the same way that, for example, France and the UK have done in the post-war period. Instead, Germany's focus on multilateralism is evident in the way in which it frames its defence industrial policy. By contrast with the UK and France, no mention is made in public documents of the need for defence industrial autonomy for strategic reasons; in fact, the emphasis lies on multinational cooperation instead. As the 2006 Defence White Paper set out,

'German security policy is multilateral in character. Together with the member states of the European Union, Germany is committed to active multilateralism. No state in the world nowadays is able to ensure its security on its own. Germany therefore safeguards its security interests primarily in international and supranational institutions and plays an active role in shaping their policies' (German Government, 2006: 21).

This outlook remained central to the Defence Policy Guidelines paper of 2011,

'Germany's security objectives and interests can only be pursued in cooperation with its partners. The United Nations, the North Atlantic Alliance and the European Union are the international framework of our security and defence policy.' (DPG, 2011: 5)

And this multilateralism fits comfortably with an emphasis on multinational defence cooperation,

'In the light of decreasing quantities, closer military cooperation among European countries must be reflected in the cooperation of European defence industries, too. Agreeing on synergies when it comes to developing, procuring and operating military systems will be crucial for securing indispensable military capabilities in Europe.' (DPG, 2011: 16).

So deeply ingrained is the multilateralist approach, there is no explicit or even implicit German conception of a hedge against the disappearance of the NATO alliance. While the UK and France do not deal directly with such a risk, the greater emphasis on autonomy suggests that both, particularly France, do see their military capabilities and industrial capacity as a hedge against an uncertain future (Jones, 2011: 20).



On the other hand, there is a German defence industrial policy, and one of its goals is to retain technologies and expertise at the domestic level. This is phrased as a requirement for 'indigenous defence technology capabilities in order to co-shape the European integration process in the armaments sector' (German Government, 2006: 63). Thus, the commitment to 'multilateralism' does not extend to the creation of significant one-sided dependencies on others for high-tech industrial sectors such as defence aerospace, nor has it yet resulted in significant defence industrial specialisation for whole capabilities. On the contrary, Germany seeks to retain its indigenous defence industrial capacity,

'The political leadership and industry must jointly define the strategic positioning of German defence technology in Europe. The Federal Government will do its utmost in this regard to preserve a balanced mix of defence technology, including its high-technology areas, in Germany' (German Government, 2006: 63).

Thus, from the defence industrial perspective, while multilateralism underpins specific projects, German defence industrial capacity is predicated on a national perspective. And the 2011 DPG is clear that, 'The role of the defence industry is to serve the Bundeswehr' (DPG, 2011: 16). Germany may not make any explicit case for its defence industry as a hedge against uncertainty, and yet *de facto* it does provide a hedge because there is a firm policy to retain at least some important defence technologies in Germany. Yet there is also a strong sense that due to its political culture German official documents cannot speak in such terms. As security analyst Henrik Heidenkamp argues,

'The whole idea of autonomy is somewhat alien to German security culture as well as to German policy making. That being said, in defence industrial terms many German governments have taken steps to ensure that there is an autonomous capability within Germany but that's more of an industrial, economic argument that they are following rather than a defence argument' (Interview 28, May 2015).

Thus, there is here an important distinction between France and the UK and Germany. Other than to rely on the *de facto* sense in which Germany has a hedge against abandonment, there is no evidence of such a policy in a positive sense.

#### *Autonomy for positive or idiosyncratic interests*

Throughout the Cold War, German defence policy was equated with NATO and the territorial defence of western Europe. Restricted to such a role, the need for operationally autonomous forces was limited. In the post-Cold War period, for Germany autonomy has come to mean autonomous control over forces, but to the extent that the decision to deploy them should be a national one. And this relates to contributions to NATO, US-led or EU missions, and does not reflect any ambition to deploy an autonomous German force in the way that France or the UK, to a lesser degree, seeks to do. One exception to this would be the German-led EU battlegroup, which while 'multilateral' in remit would still need to be sustained autonomously. It would likely need, however, to draw on assistance from other EU states for various critical capabilities. Above all, a single battlegroup is not intended for high-level war-fighting where a capability for 'escalation dominance' is necessary. Germany also has no specific, out of area territorial interests that it would need to defend with the military instrument. Its interests in defending against terrorism and the threat of piracy to international trade are essentially shared with its allies. The multinational 'framework nation concept' developed by Germany may suggest the emergence of Germany leadership in this field, but as will be seen, the concept remains by its very nature firmly anchored in a multilateralist approach (DPG, 2011).

#### *Military capabilities as means to strategic ends - Germany*

Few would argue that the defence policy of Germany can be understood without consideration of the political culture that grew out of the German experience of Nazism and the public memory of decades of instability, deprivation and the destruction of two world wars. It is often argued that the people of West Germany and then Germany came to see their country as a different sort of power from others. It would be a 'civilian power', focussed on developing economic rather than military power (Maull, 2000). While the development of such a culture is surely of historical

importance in explaining West German behaviour, it does not necessarily clash with expected behaviour within an asymmetric alliance, nor does it fully discount neorealist-informed theory, as Duffied has argued (1999). The military contribution of West Germany to the alliance, limited to a posture of self-defence through the *Bundeswehr*, was compatible with West Germany's cultural emphasis on military restraint but did not detract from a considerable military contribution to the alliance interests of NATO. And, from the perspective of a subordinate state seeking to avoid entrapment by the dominant power, it may even have been beneficial.

As Kundnani argues,

'the Federal Republic did not adopt a civilian power identity in an act of altruism. Rather, it did so because it saw it as the best way of achieving its own post-war foreign-policy ambitions and objectives' (Kundnani, 2011: 33).

In the post-Cold War period Germany has had to adapt. It can be argued that in so far as German decision-makers tend to agonise over balancing domestic cultural constraints with the need to exert influence over the US, Germany has indeed become more 'normalised' in the post-Cold War as a subordinate state in an asymmetric alliance. German political culture goes a long way to explaining the high levels of reticence among decision-makers for 'out of area' interventions. As Keller notes, 'Germany's political leadership is instinctively reluctant to use hard power' (2015: 105). On the other hand, Germany is a powerful economic player and increasingly regarded as a natural leader in the EU. In more recent years, Russian aggression towards Ukraine and the risk to NATO members that border Russia has put territorial defence back on NATO's agenda, once more highlighting Germany's geo-strategic importance. To this extent, Germany hardly wants for an influential position in Europe or for attention from Washington. This advantageous position might lead to there being less pressure on Germany to confront its anti-militaristic culture. As such, Germany can balance a range of means for influence over the US against that of military contributions.

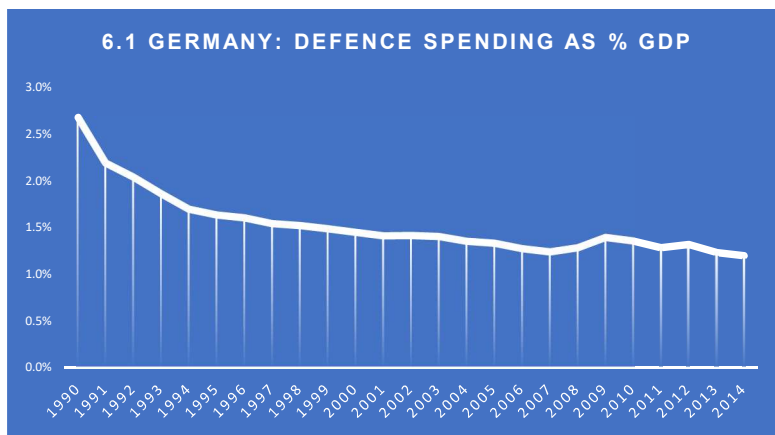
None of this means, however, that Germany has so much influence in Europe that it can neglect that of the US, which in relative terms has a far larger economy, much

greater military power and far greater security interests around the world. Germany's important political and economic position in the EU does not in itself provide an opportunity to influence Washington when it comes to the American use of hard-edged military power or the shape and longevity of the US commitment to European security. It is perhaps more plausible then to argue that were it not for Germany's continued geostrategic and economic power and its cultural predispositions, it would need to do more to ensure influence over the US through the role of credible military ally. Even then, due to the inherent flexibility of the asymmetric alliance configuration that would not entail loyalty to the US in all circumstances. Despite these factors concerning its idiosyncratic culture and economic strength, however, Germany has moved towards a commitment to the use of force on expeditionary operations. The analysis above suggests that German behaviour does reflect the expectations of behaviour for a subordinate state in a dominant-subordinate configuration. That said, the impact of German's cultural predispositions cannot be dismissed, and neither can the impact of Germany's outsize economic weight in Europe.

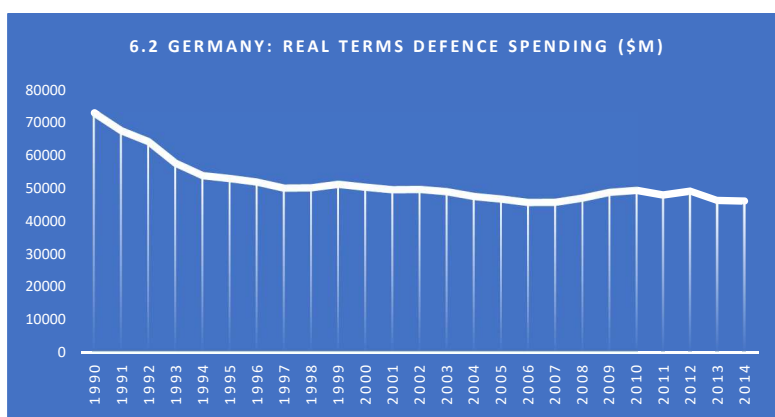
### **iii. The logic of a crisis: German strategic ends under pressure**

#### *The affordability of military capability and the need for efficiency*

German defence spending in the post-Cold War period follows a very similar pattern to that of other European NATO states. Figure 6.1 shows that the first half of the 1990s saw a dramatic drop in German defence spending as a share of GDP, which obviously corresponds with the end of the Cold War. This was followed by a more gradual decline between 1994 and 2007, then a small increase reflecting operations in Afghanistan and a subsequent small decline. Figure 6.2 shows that since the mid-1990s, as with other European NATO states, real terms defence spending in Germany has been largely flat.



**Figure 6.1. German defence spending as share of GDP 1990-2014 (source: SIPRI)**



**Figure 6.2. Real terms German defence spending 1990-2014 (source: SIPRI)**

Thus, as with other European NATO states, Germany has not significantly reduced defence spending in real terms over the last twenty years. Rather, it has not passed on the proceeds of its economic growth to the defence budget. Keller argues that German defence thus,

‘rests on a modest but solid base of steady budgets in recent years and acquisition programmes that, while modest in scale, are technologically advanced’ (2015: 106).

The challenge of inflation in the costs of defence acquisition and personnel has, however, undermined the scale if not necessarily the breadth of German military capabilities. And the share of the defence budget allocated to R&D and procurement has also declined in absolute terms (2015: 101). This familiar problem of flat in real terms defence budgets and high cost inflation in the provision of military capabilities has tended to lead in Germany, as elsewhere, to the ‘salami slicing’ of units of

equipment rather than the wholesale deletion of military capabilities; initial unit orders for major equipment have been pared back across all capabilities. Thus, Typhoon aircraft have been reduced from a planned 177 to 140; numbers of NH90 helicopters have been halved in their support role and cut by a third in the multipurpose role; naval mine countermeasure ships have been halved and Leopard 2 tank numbers cut back by over a third to 225 (2015: 103).

Compared with some of its European peers, the 2008 financial crisis did not hit the German fiscal position particularly badly. However, given the high levels of debt that had been built up over many years following reunification the crisis did prompt Germany to introduce a 'debt-break', which set a constitutional limit to structural debt of 0.35% of GDP. The Government was to bring down public debt over a transitional period starting in 2011 to be ready to apply the rule from 2016. This process led to public spending cuts in Germany, and initially to a demand for defence spending to make savings of €8.3bn between 2011 and 2014. These cuts were, however, subsequently withdrawn, and instead there was a marginal increase in defence spending thus continuing the broadly flat in real terms trend. The financial crisis did not, therefore, lead to anything like the kind of impact on German military capabilities that it did for the states considered in previous chapters. The long-term effects of flat investment and the rising cost of military capabilities did, however, create similar, if less immediately acute, problems for German military capabilities in the same period.

### *Strategic ends under pressure*

As with other European NATO states, the situation in Afghanistan was placing considerable strain on Germany's official policy of 'credible partner' to the US and 'responsible' state in the international system. For example, Timo Noetzel (2011) has argued that Afghanistan heightened longstanding tensions in the German government and armed forces between the preference for a culture of military restraint and the need for an effective operational force in the Kunduz province for which Germany had responsibility. This tension manifested itself in conflict between those who saw the operation as an aberration but one that should continue to be labelled a 'stability mission' to avoid signalling any great break with German policy, and those who regarded it as a 'war' that required an aggressive counter-insurgency

(COIN) strategy in line with that being deployed by the US (Noetzel, 2011: 408). The tension was in part resolved, at the operational level at least, by successful pressure from the US to shift the *Bundeswehr* towards a COIN strategy involving greater risks for its personnel.

This same tension was also manifest, however, in the capabilities available to German armed forces. Noetzel notes that German defence planning was still focussed on large-scale conventional warfare, and as a result the *Bundeswehr* was 'critically short of capabilities that are essential to the successful conduct of COIN operations'. Operations in Kunduz revealed that, 'the *Bundeswehr* lacks vital technological platforms in areas such as unmanned surveillance, tactical air mobility and close air support'. As with other European NATO allies, there was also a critical shortage of helicopters to move forces quickly around vast areas of terrain (2011: 403).

Germany's difficulties in Afghanistan, both operational and in terms of materiel, prompted major reforms to the German army. Defence Minister Karl Theodor zu Guttenberg presided over radical policies, including a shift from conscript to volunteer armed forces and a new ambition for the *Bundeswehr* to be able to sustain an expeditionary force of 10,000 troops, bringing Germany more into line with British and French planning assumptions. American pressure on Germany to improve its performance in Afghanistan thus led to a significant shift in its approach to the use of armed force<sup>48</sup>, but it also served to highlight stark capability gaps. Deficiencies in capabilities were not, however, only related to those of out of area operations. While the operations in Afghanistan continued, questions were raised over the level of readiness of conventional forces for territorial defence, a far less controversial issue in German politics. A Bundestag report leaked in 2014 highlighted substantial problems with the availability of military equipment. Only one out of four attack submarines was operational, only 70 of 180 Boxer armoured vehicles were fit for deployment and only seven of the navy's fleet of 43 helicopters were available (*Guardian*, October 7, 2014) Thus, as with the previous case studies under consideration in this thesis, Germany was not able to sustain sufficient breadth and

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<sup>48</sup> US General David Petraeus asserted that in Afghanistan Germany undertook its first counterinsurgency operations since the Second World War (*Spiegel Online*, 19 September, 2010).

scale in its capabilities in order to meet its strategic ends, particularly as regards the 'struggle for influence' over the US, but even with regard to its own basic territorial self-defence commitments.

By contrast with the UK and France, however, there is far less concern in Germany over idiosyncratic interests, as the assumption remains that Germany operates within a multilateral framework. As one senior German officer remarks,

'Compared to states like the UK and certainly France, Germany is much more relaxed about being dependent, but that's because we don't have the ambition to necessarily deploy a force abroad alone' (Interview 28, May 2015)

#### *Common problem, common solution?*

It has been seen that ministerial concerns over the performance of Germany's armed forces in Afghanistan provided the impetus for a fresh consideration of defence policy. At the same time, as with the other states considered in this thesis, the potential for greater cooperation was viewed as a potential solution to the problem of capability shortfalls. The 2011 *Defence Policy Guidelines*, prepared under zu Guttenberg, looked towards 'intra-European coordination' to meet shortfalls in German and wider European capabilities. The policy paper called for new mechanisms to increase the efficiency of alliance deployments, recognising that 'the challenge of providing security has to be met with more limited resources' (DPG, 11). To this end, the policy paper outlined a new 'level of ambition' specifically in the context of multilateral deployments, with Germany playing the role of 'framework nation'. Thus, the paper set out the option of,

'assuming command responsibility as a framework nation.... providing the required capabilities for the entire task spectrum, into which contributions of other nations can be integrated in a flexible and synergetic manner' (DPG, 2011).

Germany subsequently developed this 'framework nation concept' (FNC) and presented it to NATO in 2013 as a policy proposal for addressing the problem of capability shortfalls among European allies. As Diego Ruiz Palmer explains,



‘This initiative aimed at forming functional groupings around a larger Ally, with the objective of ensuring that, together, the participating Allies would possess, in the mid-to long term, an entire military capability, as identified in the NATO Defence Planning Process, which the larger Ally would not be able to field, *in toto*, on its own. Such arrangements would give smaller Allies an opportunity to contribute their smaller, often specialized, but important capabilities.’ (Ruiz Palmer, 2016: 3)

Germany’s proposal for adoption of the FNC by NATO coincided with policy developments at NATO on how to address the problem of a loss of depth and breadth of capability among European NATO forces. As a senior official at NATO explains,

‘The concept behind it was that America has a full spectrum war-fighting capability; it could do WW3 on its own without any assistance from the rest of us if it needs to. There was no European ally left that had a full spectrum war-fighting capability of its own. Post 2010, the UK has got rid of maritime patrol aircraft, the aircraft carriers and harriers etc. Germany and France were in exactly the same position. But across European allies you could create a full spectrum capability. It would never equal the size of the Americans’ but at least you could do it and demonstrate some form of commitment to the US beyond just the political’ (Interview 8, June 2016)

From a purely operational perspective, the notion of a framework nation is not new. Operations in Afghanistan worked on this basis, for example, as have NATO multinational formations, which were developed following the end of the Cold War; and the EU battlegroups use a similar concept. The break with the past came, however, with the combined attempt to integrate specific plans for cooperation into the NATO capability planning process, together with a link to bi-national and small ‘clusters’ of capability cooperation. A central challenge for the FNC is that specific capabilities are not linked directly to NATO roles; as a senior NATO official remarks, ‘nations are always compromising between what they need themselves and what NATO is asking them for’ (Interview 8, June 2016).

It is also suggested that the FNC was in part a German response to the Franco-British defence cooperation launched under the Lancaster House treaties in 2010. Henrik Heidenkamp, a defence policy analyst and former German official argues that the FNC allowed Germany to demonstrate it had its own offer to tackle the problems of shrinking European capabilities,

‘they were clear that the UK and France would do something, because they are the two countries that are most frustrated about this. So, the option for Germany was either to stay out of this and let France and the UK take the lead, or they could propose something that would on the one hand actually make a difference - if it’s efficiently and effectively implemented - but at the same time would not only echo British-French policy but would allow for the introduction of German thinking and German policy’ (Interview 28, May 2015).

The FNC thus provides crucial context for Germany’s approach to defence cooperation since the 2011 defence reform process began. The approach ‘allows Germany to take the lead in areas where they feel comfortable, such as logistics training and strategic enablers. It would speak to the strengths of German capabilities but also the way the German political system works’ (Interview 28, May 2015). Over this period, Germany sought partners with which to develop the concept into concrete projects. As has been explored in chapter five, the Netherlands was at the same time suffering from acute budgetary difficulties in the funding of its military capabilities. There was therefore a concurrence of interests in considering deepening an existing defence cooperation relationship.

### *2013 Dutch-German Declaration of Intent*

As with the Dutch-Belgian cooperation initiative considered in the previous chapter, the *Declaration of Intent on the Further Enhancement of Bilateral Relations in the Field of Defence* (DoI) signed on 28<sup>th</sup> May, 2013, built on strong foundations laid over previous years, particularly during the post-Cold War period. As Dutch defence analyst Dick Zandee explains, historically the core of Dutch-German cooperation has been in the land domain,

‘They know us and we know them. We were next to the Germans on the North West plain in the Cold War. The equipment is more or less the same. There is mutual trust and their defence cultures are not that far apart. Language is not a problem as most Dutch military speak German, though English is the common *lingua* at staff levels. So, the 2013 DoI is a logical extension, built on existing experience, structures and human capital.’ (Interview 21, September 2014).

Zandee describes Dutch-German defence cooperation as ‘a curve which dates back to the Cold War and the curve has gone up over time.’ During the Cold War, as part of the Northern Army Group (NORTHAG), the 1 (Netherlands) Corps was deployed in northern Germany, immediately north of the 1 (West Germany) Corps. Bilateral cooperation involved joint training, exercises and logistics support. It was not until after the Cold War, however, that there was deeper, more integrated military cooperation. In 1991, during the drawdown of forces in Europe, the ‘multinational formation concept’ was announced, principally to tackle the problem of maintaining viable force structures. Multinational formations would thus maximise efficiency in preserving force structures and maintain the role of smaller states in command structures (Durrell Young, 1997: 2). It was in this context that the bi-national Dutch-German Corps Headquarters arose, ‘there was the idea that we have to do something with the Germans because all we’d gained during the Cold War might be lost.’ (Interview 21: September 2014)

Initially, 1 (Netherlands) Corps was to be maintained by taking on German divisions. By 1993, however, it was clear that cuts were too deep and too fast, and so a decision was taken to combine the two corps. This led to the creation of the 1 (German/Netherlands) Corps with a completely integrated bi-national headquarters. The emphasis of the corps shifted from commanding standing heavy armour divisions on the North German plain towards commanding rapid reaction expeditionary forces. Cooperation has grown steadily on this foundation and particularly in the land domain. Cooperative initiatives are, however, increasingly common between the navies and air forces. The intergovernmental framework for Dutch-German cooperation was laid out in the 2006 *Agreement between the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany and the Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands on Bilateral Defence Cooperation*, providing a

framework for cooperation including a bilateral steering group to develop and oversee further initiatives.

It is in this context of established cooperation that the *Declaration of Intent on the Further Enhancement of Bilateral Relations in the Field of Defence* (DoI), signed on 28<sup>th</sup> May, 2013, must be understood. The DoI is not a ground-breaking initiative in terms of creating new structures and political terms for cooperation, as is the case with the Franco-British TDSC; instead, the aim is ‘further enhancement’ of existing cooperation. Yet while the DoI does not provide new principles or motivations at the general level, the initiatives it outlines do suggest a deeper push into the mutualisation of military capabilities and show the influence of the FNC. The new initiatives also reflect the 2011 reforms and the German emphasis on a shift to a more expeditionary capability built around the formation of the *Division Schnelle Kräfte* into which, as will be seen, the Dutch Air-Mobile Brigade will be integrated.

The concrete initiatives are derived ‘bottom-up’ from the armed forces themselves, where efficiencies can be generated. And, as with the initiatives covered in previous chapters, the DoI is an attempt at comprehensiveness across all services and capabilities,

‘All possibilities for bilateral cooperation will be exploited, within all areas of concept & capability development, command and control, combat as well as combat support and combat service support’ (DoI, 2013).

German officials view the significance of the DoI as marking a shift from ‘cooperation to integration’. And analysts view the DoI in the context of German policy in developing the FNC and making it concrete, seeing the agreement as a centrepiece for the development and justification of the concept. As security analyst Christian Mölling notes,

‘The Dutch-German initiative is put in the context of the framework nation concept, and more cooperation partners and more bilateral agreements - Poles, Czechs, Norwegians etc. Dutch-German cooperation looks very easy to deliver something,

there is something there and the experts can distinguish what is new and what is old' (Interview 27, October 2013).

As such, the DoI serves a more political objective for Germany than it does for the Netherlands. Mölling and Major have also argued that there is a political perspective on the German side in terms of binding future governments into cooperative arrangements because it is more difficult to cut capabilities associated with 'internationalised structures'.

'It legitimates the preservation of the present bandwidth of national military structures and capabilities – so as the "width before depth" idea envisages. The depth, i.e. the mission sustainability which is now dwindling owing to the planned cutbacks in the Bundeswehr, is supposed to be offset by partners. If Berlin found partners who are willing to hold on to Germany for the long term, the German government would no longer be able to change, at least not unilaterally, these then internationalised structures without suffering political damage.' (2014: 13)

The political purpose of the cooperation is, however, secondary to its objective of providing greater efficiency from military expenditure. The DoI makes clear the objectives of cooperation as viewed by the two states are to deliver on efficiency,

'The two sides underline that closer cooperation will improve efficiency in the area of capability development, thus creating a long-term advantage for both countries... Both sides will additionally strive for an optimum resource allocation and cost-efficiency in all defence-related areas.' (DoI, 2013).

The previous chapter outlined the budgetary problems of the Netherlands and the role this played in their push towards deeper cooperation. The loss of the Leopard 2 main battle tanks was deeply controversial within the Dutch armed forces (Steinglass, 2011). German officials also recognise the 'very strong economic perspectives' present in the Dutch push for defence cooperation in 2012-2013, and it has been seen these pressures did not exist for Germany to the same degree (Interview 26, October 2013). Yet while the Bundeswehr did not face similar pressure to find immediate savings, interviewees believe that despite the greater flexibility in

the German defence budget, the longstanding problem of flat budgets and rising costs was a fundamental concern for Germany, and the primary motivation for the FNC initiative and the DoI. While there may be more funding available for Germany it is not seen as a panacea for its own capability shortfalls,

‘We don’t see the money as a chance to avoid cooperation but to be more attractive to others and to set up cooperation. Because whatever you do you will never have enough.’ (Interview 29, June 2015).)

The 2013 DoI was driven by the search for greater efficiency in tandem with a German political desire to ensure the success of the FNC agenda. Yet there are serious questions as to the reliability of military formations based on close partnerships and high integration. The concept is predicated on multinational agreement for launching missions, and while this may be a reasonable assumption for NATO Article 5 scenarios, it is less clear that any such formation could be relied upon for ‘out of area’ missions (Mölling and Major, 2014: 14). This is an important issue given the controversial nature of recent out of area missions such as that in Afghanistan, not least among the German public. And there are also questions as to the viability of making a linkage between the FNC and the mutualisation of military capability through bilateral or cluster arrangements. Yet mutual reliance and role and task sharing was raised as a policy goal for Germany in its 2011 DPG. The paper classified the status of military capability from exclusively national to mutually dependent:

*‘capabilities that are of critical national importance and are therefore kept available on a strictly national basis;*

*capabilities that allow closer cooperation with partners without compromising national capability (pooling);*

*capabilities where a mutual, coordinated reliance on European partners is conceivable (role and task sharing).’*

The expectation that a multinational military formation can rely on the mutualisation of capabilities is perhaps the most challenging assumption of contemporary German defence policy. And this will be the focus of the next section, as this chapter turns to the concrete initiatives set out in the 2013 DoI.

#### **iv. The logic of mutualisation: the Dutch-German 2013 *Declaration of Intent***

##### *The structural-relational opportunities and constraints on mutualisation for efficiency*

It has been argued that the two key effects of the structural-relational context of the asymmetric alliance configuration are the temporal durability of the alliance and the flexibility of policy within that alliance. First, then, it is argued that the alliance provides a future temporal period over which suppressed balancing between states can be expected to dampen the security dilemma and concerns over relative gains, and thus enable cooperation in the most sensitive areas relating to the provision of military capability. By contrast with the other European states considered in previous chapters, Germany ought to be uniquely well-suited to making efficiency gains by drawing on the possibility of efficiency inherent in NATO. Due to its development under the historical circumstances outlined above, German defence policy has never valued industrial and operational autonomy to the same extent as the UK and France, or even Belgium and the Netherlands. Neither does Germany have the post-colonial interests or influence that the UK and France have, and which has some impact on the kinds of forces they require. And, as a result of the post-war restrictions on the form and type of Germany's military capability, it lacks the hard-edged expeditionary capabilities that the UK and France, and to a degree the Netherlands, have in their inventories. Rather, military force is always viewed in a multilateral context, as a contribution to the wider alliance. As has been seen, German officials and officers often draw on these arguments to underpin a positive view of defence cooperation. As German Lt. General Bruno Kasdorf notes,

'Germany's security objectives and interests can only be pursued in cooperation with its partners. The United Nations, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the European Union are the international framework of our security and defence policy.'  
(Kasdorf, 2014: 200)

And it is also claimed that these common foundations underpin cooperation between the Netherlands and Germany,

‘Both sides share common interests and values. These will remain the firm basis of their bilateral relations and be at the core of their enhanced cooperation in the future. Both sides intend to further strengthen the ability of NATO and the European Union to take action in matters of security, defence and armaments policy’ (Netherlands Government, 2013).

Despite this emphasis on multilateralism, however, Germany has not been significantly more prone to mutualisation of military capabilities than any other European state. One explanation for this is that while one side of the German coin is multilateralism, the other side is the relative reticence to deploy force as considered above. As has been argued in the first section of this chapter, Germany is subject to the same structural-relational constraints as its European peers, and therefore shares the same strategic ends. For historical and cultural reasons, however, it does not necessarily use the military instrument as a means to achieve these ends in the same way as other states. Part of the explanation for this lies in the second structural aspect of the asymmetric alliance, which is the constraint of low interdependence on the possibility of efficiency.

Low interdependence means that there are few structural-relational imperatives for allies in an asymmetric alliance to support each other across all interests. The constraint of low interdependence is the negative print of Germany’s openness to the possibility of efficiency. While Germany may be especially open to multinational cooperation it is also especially reticent about using out of area military force in support of the US, or for that matter, the UK or France. This is not necessarily to say that Germany will not deploy its forces, because of course it may do, as the Kosovo and Kunduz experiences demonstrate. The challenge, as with the other cases considered in this thesis, is that of aligning temporality in the use of force, which is very difficult, particularly given the close scrutiny of military operations by the Bundestag. And aligning capability type with a potential partner is also difficult, given that Germany has historically had a more limited range of expeditionary capabilities.



While Germany is slowly moving closer to the UK and France in terms of its conception of the use of military force it remains the case that its domestic political culture is one of restraint. This has ramifications for the kinds of military capabilities it seeks; Germany is not about to acquire, for example, an aircraft carrier. Neither is Germany under great pressure to shift that culture to exert more influence on the US, because as Europe's leading economy in a crucial geostrategic location, it can rely on a high degree of influence in Washington for reasons other than its military capabilities. For the UK and France, the military instrument plays a much more important role in the struggle for influence over the US, and even here, as has been shown, Franco-British cooperation still falls short of the mutualisation of operational capabilities. As such, Germany is not an attractive partner for mutual dependence close to the operational frontline, at least in terms being a swift and capable ally for the US, and by extension, the UK and France.

On the other hand, where concrete interests are shared across the alliance, most notably in the form of territorial defence, as embodied in NATO's Article 5, then the possibility of extracting greater efficiency from resources is much higher. The problem, as has been discussed, is that particular military capabilities are not exclusively earmarked for the territorial defence of Europe. The crisis in the Ukraine began in late 2013, after the signing of the 2013 DOI, and as such is beyond the scope of this thesis, but the subsequent attention that it brought to the territorial defence of Europe does serve to highlight the dilemma of mutualisation of capabilities in relation to territorial defence and out of area operations. As Heidenkamp puts it,

'The fact that the centre of attention for most Western European countries is to re-learn collective defence speaks to the benefit of these bilaterals... It's not a 'lucky' coincidence but it's helpful that it's *this* strategic change. If we had to advance bilateral and other multinational cooperation in a crisis management scenario somewhere in Africa that would be more much more difficult to do than to advance cooperation for collective defence' (Interview 28, May 2015).

As Claudia Major and Christian Mölling have pointed out, there are concerns that Germany's reticence might have an impact on potential partners.

‘some nations are concerned that the FNC could adversely affect the European operational readiness because German mission scepticism might spread to its partners. If go-getting nations like the Netherlands or Poland commit themselves to the framework nation Germany, they will become dependent on Germany with regard to their decisions’ (Major and Mölling, 2014: 14).

There is thus an apparent tension between the efficiencies that could be delivered by the mutualisation of military capabilities and the differences in the way that Germany and others pursue their strategic ends. Yet Germany and the Netherlands have also gone quite some way towards mutualisation in elements of the initiatives announced in 2013. The final section will consider these concrete cooperation initiatives against the same model that has been deployed in the previous two case studies.

#### *Mutualisation of capability at high temporal-spatial distance from frontline*

As with previous chapters, the hypothesis on the mutualisation of capability at a high temporal distance from the frontline has been extracted from the model. Such elements of capability include, for example, defence industrial development and production, training and supporting infrastructure:

H1: Capability mutualisation may be found at high temporal distance from the frontline, with or without high certainty of support for concrete interests.

The first area of potential cooperation under this heading relates to defence industrial development and production. Defence industrial cooperation between Germany and the Netherlands is based on the 2006 *Memorandum of Understanding concerning defence materiel cooperation*. As Dick Zandee notes, defence industrial cooperation does not play a large role in the Dutch-German military relationship (Interview 21, September 2014), but the 2013 DoI did suggest some significant areas in which industrial cooperation might be developed, notably in the maritime field for submarines and mine-counter measure vessels (MCM). The DoI stated that, ‘Shared knowledge and expertise can be used for the design and development of a new class of submarines for both countries’ (Netherlands Government, 2013). It also

committed to explore possibilities for Germany and the Netherlands to work with Belgium on 'knowledge acquisition and sharing, in the field of mine countermeasures in order to investigate common replacement of MCM capabilities' (Netherlands Government, 2013).

At the time of writing this thesis, little progress had been made on either of these projects, although the Netherlands and Belgium have separately agreed to pursue an MCM replacement programme on a bilateral basis. As has been seen in previous chapters, defence industrial cooperation is difficult to deliver, particularly when national requirements differ. And this is the case as regards Dutch and German submarine capabilities; the Netherlands has a requirement for deep ocean-going submarines to operate in the Atlantic, while the German requirement is for operations in more shallow seas, such as the Baltic (Interview 21, September 2014).

The second mitigation of deeper defence industrial cooperation is the significant asymmetry between the two states' industrial bases across all areas of capability development and generation. Germany retains an industrial capability to build submarines while the Netherlands no longer does so. Short of very significant investment, the Netherlands is therefore likely to have to find a more asymmetric relationship, which may lead to some form of industrial dependency for the generation of its future submarine capability. As such, there is unlikely to be any Dutch-German mutual dependency created in this field, although the Netherlands may be able to sustain some of its current submarine expertise through a joint development with a larger partner, and in the field of MCM vessels, there may be areas where mutual dependencies over the development of certain technologies might be possible.

Thus, while the Netherlands and Germany could in principle create mutual dependencies in the defence industrial field, there are significant unit-level factors that militate against any such development. While the model suggests that there is no systemic reason in principle why there could not be mutual dependencies at the defence industrial level, this asymmetry of scale narrows the potential considerably. This can be seen by contrast with the Franco-British cooperation initiatives outlined in chapter four where there is a stronger symmetry of scale in defence industrial

output and requirements. Fundamentally, the situation reflects the constraints of internal resources on the ability of the Netherlands to hedge against abandonment; the Dutch economy is not large enough to sustain broad indigenous industrial capabilities, though it may try to retain expertise in niche areas through cooperation with larger parties.

The second field of cooperation under this heading relates to shared training and infrastructure, and here there is a great deal more scope for cooperation. Indeed, bilateral army cooperation on training has been an important component of the relationship since during the Cold War. The 2013 DoI sets out a number of potential areas for deepening this cooperation, including 'common joint fire support training'; 'intensification of Dutch-German training & exercise including UN training and para training & exercises'; and training in the navy and air force in various fields. Much of this cooperation takes place under the umbrella of the 1<sup>st</sup> German-Netherlands Corps HQ. The similarities in Dutch and German equipment and the decision to embrace English as a common language means that common training is now recognised as an area where there is great potential for savings (Bundeswehr, 2014). The new focus on areas such as joint fire support training reflects the push towards deeper integration of the two armies, and the ramifications of this will be considered below.

As the model suggests, these aspects of capability mutualisation are possible between partners because, in terms of concerns over entrapment or abandonment, they represent a very low risk. The mutualisation of these aspects of capability necessarily takes place at considerable temporal and spatial distance from the frontline. In terms of training, while staff, facilities and concepts may be shared, the partner states retain some level of expertise in the field and thus the ability to deploy the associated capabilities autonomously. The considerable challenges to such cooperation derive mostly from differences in industrial scale, requirements, equipment, doctrine and so on.

### *Mutualisation of capabilities on the frontline*

Turning to the mutualisation of capabilities for immediate deployment on the 'frontline' of operations, the following hypothesis is drawn from the model:

H2: Capability mutualisation may be found at zero temporal-spatial distance from the frontline, where there is a very high certainty of support for concrete interests.

#### i. 1 (German/Netherlands) Corps Headquarters

The 2013 DoI states that,

'Both nations intend to enhance the use of 1 (German/Netherlands) Corps as a platform for combined training as well as the leading command and control element for multinational operations' (Netherlands Government, 2013).

As outlined above, the 1<sup>st</sup> German/Netherlands Corps (GNC) Headquarters is a completely integrated bi-national command. Based in Munster, Germany, the corps is under the rotating command of either a Dutch or German officer working alongside a deputy commander from the partner state. The HQ has the capability to plan and oversee major exercises and other training as well as to function as an operational HQ commanding up to 60,000 troops (NATO, 2017b). It has a permanent bi-national staff and support battalion (GNC, 2017). As with other rapid reaction corps assigned to NATO, only the HQ is a 'standing' component of the corps, with forces assigned to it as necessary for training or operational deployment. In 2003, the 1<sup>st</sup> GNC took responsibility for the NATO International Assistance Force (ISAF) Headquarters in Kabul, Afghanistan (NATO, 2017b). It is a certified land HQ for the NATO Response Force and was recently certified as an HQ for land-orientated joint operations. As German Lt General Bruno Kasdorf explains,

'The common goal is to support NATO and the EU, to provide an efficient force potential capable of commanding land-centric operations and to bring this to bear in an international context' (Kasdorf, 2014: 204).

The binational integration of staff into a standing corps HQ is a unique military arrangement. The Netherlands and Germany have no other corps HQ at their exclusively national disposal. As such it represents a significant mutualisation of capability and a corresponding restraint on flexibility. As Zandee observes, 'this is deep integration... you cannot deploy the command for a mission without the agreement of both parties.' (Interview 21, September 2014) The Germans and the Dutch effectively share the capability required to train for and command large-scale operations. As one senior German officer notes, this sacrifice in autonomy stands in considerable contrast to that of France or the UK,

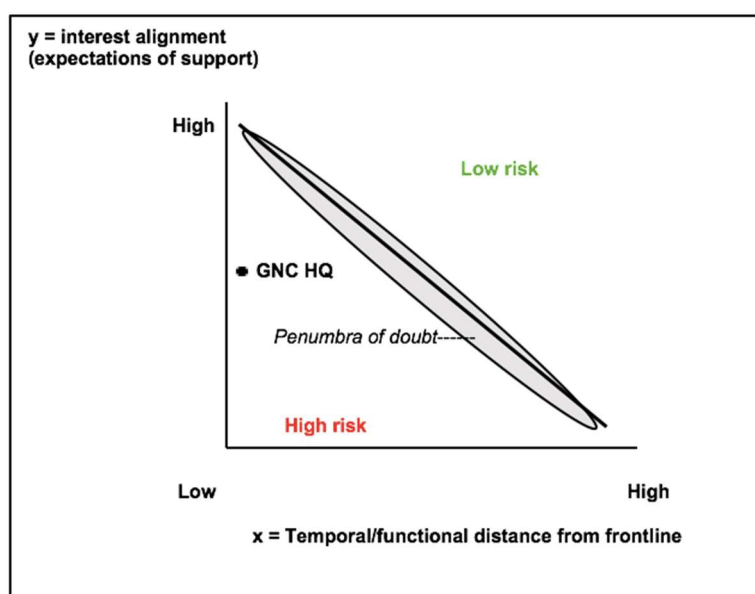
'Germany does not have a corps HQ of its own. The French go another way, they have their own corps HQ in Lilles, there is an international contribution but they can go it alone' (Interview 29, June 2015),

Likewise, while the UK does not have an exclusively national corps HQ it acts as the framework nation for the Allied Rapid Reaction Corps (ARRC), itself arising from the former 1<sup>st</sup> British Corps based in the north of West Germany, which was disbanded following the end of the Cold War. While the ARRC has a multinational staff, it is predominately staffed by UK officers and could presumably be reconstituted as a national corps HQ if necessary.

Thus, while the GNC does not provide the same level of operational autonomy in principle open to the UK and France, the mutualisation of the HQ does provide the Netherlands and Germany with the possibility of retaining the skills, experience and influence that come with the staffing of a NATO certified corps HQ. And the mutualisation of a corps HQ does not mean that the Netherlands and Germany are restricted in terms of the more discrete capabilities they can contribute to multinational missions under NATO or other auspices. It does, however, limit the contribution of the corps HQ capability only to those missions where there is agreement between the two parties.

Considering this case against the theoretical model, it is clear that when the HQ itself is deployed there is zero temporal distance from the frontline. According to the model set out in this thesis, such frontline mutualisation of a capability ought only to occur

when there is a very high certainty of support for concrete interests. The previous chapter gave the example of shared Dutch-Belgian air policing, and in that case the particular interest is virtually identical. In this case, however, it cannot be assumed that the concrete interests of Germany and the Netherlands, as related to the deployment of a corps HQ, would always be so identical. This is represented in figure 6.3. This anomaly against the model can be explained by considering the differences between NATO's Article 5 territorial defence obligations on the one hand, and multinational 'out of area' missions on the other.



**Figure 6.3. Germany-Netherlands HQ distance from frontline**

In one sense the case does meet the hypothesis set out above. In terms of the use of the HQ as a contribution to NATO's role in the territorial defence of its European member states through the provision of deterrence, and a potential role in coordinating the response to a hostile attack that triggered Article 5, the concrete interests of Germany and the Netherlands are highly likely to be identical. They would share close to identical interests in ensuring the integrity of the alliance and the security of their own territories. The picture is far less clear, however, as regards out of area operations. The reason for this is suggested in the discussion on the FNC in the previous discussion. According to the model, any particular interest in an out of area mission, with the exception perhaps of civilian extraction or humanitarian assistance, is likely to come under the strategic end of the struggle for influence over

the US. As far as such ends are concerned, subordinate states have considerable flexibility in the way they choose to support the dominant state or indeed each other. It is therefore very difficult to predict, even for states with similar political cultures and security perspectives in general, whether or not both would share a given particular interest under such scenarios. The model would therefore suggest that Germany and the Netherlands are taking a great risk in mutualising their corps HQ, and that there is a high risk of entrapment or abandonment in the relationship when it comes to the deployment of the HQ in support of concrete interests under the strategic end of the struggle for influence.

Yet the risk is not as considerable as the model suggests, and there are two reasons for this. The first relates to the similarity of the way in which Germany and the Netherlands pursue their strategic ends and the second relates to the nature of the capability itself. First, neither Germany nor the Netherlands seek operational autonomy over their forces at the corps scale. Even for the UK and France there are few scenarios where such a scale would be necessary at a national level, though both apparently retain the ability to do so. By contrast the Dutch army lacks sufficient scale, so there is no prospect of the autonomous use of such a level of forces. And, while for Germany sustaining an autonomous corps might be a more realistic prospect given its considerable economic resources, its defence policy has long been conceived in a purely multilateral framework and focussed on territorial defence rather than expeditionary operations. As such, the nature of a corps HQ as a capability is rather different for Germany and the Netherlands than it might be conceived by France and the UK. Furthermore, as with previous cases considered in this thesis, given the probability of alignment of their interests, the likelihood remains that even for an out of area operation, the Netherlands and Germany would probably be in agreement over the deployment of the corps HQ, as indeed was the case in Afghanistan.

Secondly, mutualisation at the corps level is perhaps something of a special case, in that it represents a military capability of a different form and order from the others under consideration in this thesis. A shared corps HQ binds relatively few personnel into a potential entrapment-abandonment dilemma. Thus, regardless of whether Germany commits to an out of area operation, the Netherlands will still have forces



and capabilities available to offer its allies, and vice versa. And a corps HQ is not the most visible, nor the riskiest military contribution that might be deployed to demonstrate commitment to the US.

Nonetheless, there is a risk in the mutualisation of the 1<sup>st</sup> German /Netherlands Corps HQ because its deployment cannot be fully assured by either state under all circumstances. It therefore represents a restriction, not necessarily on the ability of either state to contribute forces for political influence, but rather on one part of their repertoire of military means by which to win political influence. It also means, perhaps more significantly, that the partner states must be prepared for some risk of entrapment. It would not be easy to quickly extract a mutualised HQ from an out of area mission if, for example, domestic political conditions in one of the partner states became hostile to the deployment. Given, however, that neither the Netherlands nor Germany pursues its strategic ends in such a way that requires an autonomous corps HQ, there is less concern over mutualisation. As one senior German officer puts it, 'autonomy for operations is a question of scale' and is 'relative to ambition' (Interview 26, October 2013). It is, by contrast, very difficult to imagine France and the UK agreeing to transform their corps HQs into fully integrated Franco-British bi-national structures, not only for reasons of language and culture, but also because their ambition for autonomous action remains at the corps level; the UK, for example, plans to be able to deploy *in extremis* an expeditionary force of 50,000 (UK MOD, 2015). And this would mean a stronger risk of entrapment or abandonment. For these reasons, even though the corps HQ represents mutualisation of capability at zero temporal-spatial distance from the frontline, the risks inherent in such cooperation remain reasonably low for the Netherlands and Germany.

## ii. Army cooperation and 'modular integration'

The centre-piece of the 2013 DoI is the cooperation between the Dutch and German armies. This is based on 'Project Griffin' which was outlined in the 2012 *Letter of Intent on Intensified Army Cooperation* (July 2012). The two most important areas of cooperation under this heading are the integration of the 11 (Netherlands) Airmobile Brigade (AMB) into the German Rapid Forces Division or *Division Schnelle Kräfte* (DSK), and the integration of German and Dutch armoured brigades. This includes

integrating a Dutch tank company into the 114<sup>th</sup> German Tank Battalion, which is part of the Netherlands 43<sup>rd</sup> Mechanised Brigade, itself integrated into the German 1<sup>st</sup> Panzer Division.

### *Rapid reaction forces integration*

The DSK was formed in the light of Germany's 2011 defence reforms, and is intended to integrate Germany's air manoeuvre, extraction of citizens and Special Forces operations. Army aviation, paratroopers, and special forces are brought together 'to make available complex air manoeuvre capabilities' (Kasdorf, 2011: 202). The Netherlands 11<sup>th</sup> AMB was created following the end of the Cold War as a rapid reaction force (Schoeman, 2017). Thus, the two forces provide capabilities for similar operations, although the Dutch provide specialist equipment and personnel. The German brigades that make up the DSK are experienced in airborne, i.e., paratrooper operations, and by contrast the Netherlands 11<sup>th</sup> AMB is equipped with Apache attack helicopters which can facilitate an 'air manoeuvre' capability. As Zandee notes,

'For the Germans the added value of the cooperation with the Netherlands is to learn about air assault and air manoeuvre operations, which involves fire support from armed helicopters and fighter aircraft. The Dutch very much learned this from the Brits and the Americans, the only others with this capability, needed for attacking heavily armed forces on the ground. For that you need coordination with fighter aircraft and you need armed helicopters closely operating with airborne infantry.' (Interview 21, September 2014).

As a Dutch official argues, the deal between the two parties is that the Netherlands can provide 'our expertise in helicopter operations, and we can learn from their expertise in airborne operations.' (Interview 24, June 2016.). The Dutch also gain by placing senior officers into positions at a greater scale of formation than they have access to on an exclusively national basis. This means the Dutch have,

‘division level access, and a higher-level capability. They [the Bundeswehr] have a higher-level capability, specialised in evacuation operations, strong medical component, an element that the Dutch would gain’ (Interview 21, September 2014).

The DSK now operates under a combined Dutch-German HQ with a German commander and a Dutch deputy. For Zandee, this represents a form of integration in the Division Headquarters, as well as ‘modular cooperation’, the latter because the model offers a mutualised capability at scale but with the ability to extract coherent capabilities from it for exclusive national use. As he explains,

‘It doesn’t mean that the Dutch air mobile brigade no longer exists as a separate unit. The combined HQ can be used for a real deployment, if both parties will agree to deploy of course. But we still have the possibility, like the Germans, to deploy our air mobile brigade in whatever formation, with or without air assault, separately. We can still do it nationally. It’s not completely integrated where you are completely dependent on the other to deploy the core forces.’ (Interview 21, September 2014).

As such, this form of cooperation differs from that of the binational corps HQ. There is integration but it is ‘modular’ and national forces can be withdrawn for use elsewhere at will. But the integration of the Dutch air mobile brigade into the German DSK does represent a form of specialisation to create a military formation greater than the sum of its parts, and as such there is an element of mutualisation. The DSK with the Dutch included is a more capable military force, a different capability, but one that can only be deployed with dual consent. Yet because the component capabilities within the DSK remain autonomous, the national capabilities are not bound together as they are in other examples of mutualisation.

### *Armoured division integration*

A different (non-modular) approach underpins the integration of a Dutch tank company into the German 414<sup>th</sup> Tank Battalion. The 414<sup>th</sup> Tank Battalion falls under the command of the Dutch 43<sup>rd</sup> Mechanised Brigade, which is part of the German 1<sup>st</sup> Panzer Division. In this case, perhaps the main beneficiary of the cooperation is the Dutch Army, which controversially lost its tank capability following the financial crisis.

Theoretically, the Dutch tank company could act on its own, but that would be a very small formation and, according to Zandee, will in future be completely dependent on battalion level support from the Germans. A Dutch official explains that,

‘The decision was taken in 2011 when defence had to absorb very large budget cuts. And one of the drivers of abolishing the tank capability is that you can do away with the whole supply organisation with really quite substantial amounts of money involved’ (Interview 23, June 2016).

The decision has left the 43<sup>rd</sup> Mechanised Brigade without the tank capability, and some in the Netherlands expressed considerable concern about this gap. As Zandee explains,

‘The northern (43<sup>rd</sup>) mechanised brigade lost its tanks, but that created a serious problem when NATO began to criticise The Hague that the brigade could no longer participate in ground operations against heavy mechanised forces of an opponent, because it was lacking heavy fire power. That was the international pressure to look for a solution. At the same time the Dutch Army itself was also looking for a ‘back door’ to get the tanks back. (Interview 21, September 2014).

By working with the German army, however, the Dutch army is able to operate a tank company within a German tank battalion, which is integrated into the 43<sup>rd</sup> Netherlands Mechanised Brigade, itself integrated into the German 1<sup>st</sup> Panzer Division (Interview 29, June 2015).

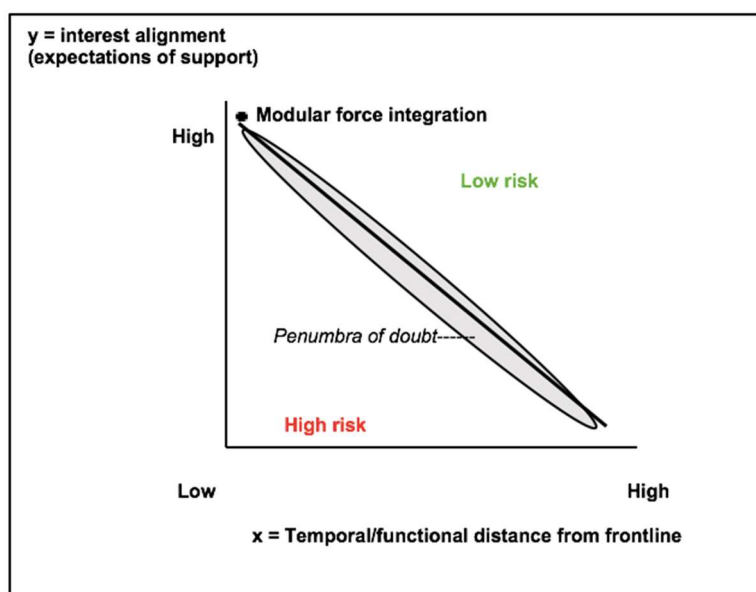
A Dutch official explains,

‘The arrangement we now have is 18 tanks, you would commit 5-6 in an operation. However, financially this is very advantageous to us. They are German tanks, the Germans maintain them and adapt them in a tactical way, and of course we pay a certain amount of money to the Germans for using these tanks. If we would have to do it all by ourselves it would be a major cost. Through this cooperation we have to invest something, but far less than we would have to pay if we had to maintain this capability all by ourselves’ (Interview 24, June 2016).

As Kasdorf explains,

‘Training Dutch tank crews and providing them with updated knowledge about manoeuvre warfare closes their capability gap. This unique project, Dutch crews training with and using German armour, could serve as a format to be used on other weapon systems as well. Here I have the cooperation [of tanks and] armoured infantry in mind. We are more than happy to be able to help the Dutch Army keep a unique capability alive... This example again shows the basic notion of our cooperation: we must not permit one nation’s capability gap to open up wider security gaps for the defence community as a whole.’ (Kasdorf, 2014: 203)

The cooperation is not, however, entirely without self-interest on the German part. Germany is suffering from acute recruitment problems and there is a payment for the leasing of the tanks. One official notes that, ‘It’s partly political but also Germany has some difficulty finding personnel’ (Interview 24, June 2016).



**Figure 6.4. Force integration distance from frontline**

These two initiatives, integration of the Dutch AMB and a tank company into German structures can be viewed as mutualisation, as shown in figure 6.4. It is, however, of a different form from previous examples. The model predicts that there may be frontline capability mutualisation where there is a very high certainty of alignment of

interests. As discussed, the modular approach means that there is a mutualised capability at a higher level, but its component elements are not entirely bound to the partner. Thus, in principle, interests do not have to be closely aligned to pursue integration. As a Dutch official explains,

‘The helicopter brigade [11<sup>th</sup> AMB] is completely independent. The red line for both Germany and the Netherlands is the political decision to commit forces, and this is still a national decision’ (Interview 24, June 2016).

And yet, the model is also accurate in that interests would have to be very closely aligned if the states were to actually deploy any of these formations for a particular interest. Although there is the ‘red line’ of national authorisation, a senior Dutch official notes the ramifications of such a deployment,

‘We have to realise, and the Minister always tells parliament, that if you have committed to a joint operation with a partner and things get hot you can’t just withdraw. You lose some of your ability to operate independently. You cannot just walk away if you do something together. We haven’t done anything before in that way. But you have to realise that if you have committed yourself to an operation you cannot just drop everything and walk away’ (Interview 24, June 2016).

As such, while the ‘red line’ to commit forces is retained by national parliaments, once committed the risk of abandonment or entrapment is unavoidable. And the risk is more likely to be one of entrapment due to the potentially dire political consequences of abandoning a partner on a mission. Furthermore, there may be greater political pressure on one partner to agree to use the capability in a situation where it is required than there would be if no integration of forces had taken place. Due to the high bar of very closely aligned interests, officials tend to view such cooperation more in the context of territorial defence than ‘out of area’ missions,

‘The nature of this integration is more likely to be Article 5. In practice when talking about deploying divisions you are talking about Article 5 type scenarios where the basic security of the alliance is in play. I don’t think if you have, for example operations in Africa, you would have that problem. For example, in Mali, in terms of

numbers it's small scale operations: ten helicopters, 1200 personnel. There is no impetus to use a division on an operation like that' (Interview 24, June 2016).

Thus, unlike some other examples of capability mutualisation, the risks involved in modular integration arise not from the decision to go ahead, but rather the risk in its use thereafter. If such cooperation is intended chiefly to retain scale for Article 5 scenarios, then alignment of interests is likely to be high. Such integrated divisions could be deployed on other operations, but interests in any such mission would have to be very highly aligned in order for the partners to have the confidence to deploy together.

### *One step from the frontline – greater risks for efficiency*

While partners may believe it likely that concrete interests will in general be closely aligned, it is also the case that due to the low politico-military interdependence of the asymmetric alliance, they are not reliably so. In such cases, risk can be mitigated by a degree of temporal-spatial distance from the frontline, but to a lesser extent than that associated with, for example shared defence industrial development or training infrastructure. The following hypothesis is thus drawn from the model,

H3: Capability mutualisation may be found at functional distance from the frontline, with or without high certainty of support for concrete interests.

For the time-period under consideration in this thesis, Dutch-German cooperation has not produced any clear examples of capability mutualisation that could be classified in this way, although there may be an element of functional distance from the frontline in the GNC HQ considered above. There are also hints in the DOI for future cooperation and some elements of the army integration outlined above may fall in this category. For example, the DoI refers to 'Fields for medium and long-term (Army) feasibility studies are: common logistic support, logistic role specialization' (Netherlands Government, 2013). Building on the integration under the corps HQ and the two German divisions, there is clearly an obvious benefit in mutualisation through specialisation and sharing of certain logistical support functions.

The issue of logistical support also arises in relation to the arrangements for the Dutch tank company. In any scenario where the 1<sup>st</sup> Panzer Division is deployed as an integrated Dutch-German force, there are no issues over logistical and maintenance support, but the question does arise as to whether the Netherlands could deploy the 43<sup>rd</sup> Mechanised Brigade independently with its tank company of German tanks operated by Dutch crews. Officials argue that some other arrangements would be required; Germany would have to authorise the involvement of its army, and such direct involvement of Germany could not be assumed (Interview 24, June 2016). Such a situation is less a case of mutual dependence than an asymmetric dependence of the Netherlands on Germany. It may be plausible, however, that other arrangements could be made with private companies and hiring some temporary expertise of technical experts that can maintain the tanks. This kind of arrangement might provide the necessary support at temporal-spatial distance from the frontline.

The relative lack of mutualisation under this final heading may in part be explained by the focus in Dutch-German cooperation on army cooperation and land operations. As suggested by some interviewees in the previous chapter, mutualisation of logistics and maintenance are more easily undertaken at an intermediate temporal-spatial distance from the frontline in the air and maritime domains, whereas this is more challenging for land operations because of the closer proximity to the risks of combat.

### *Conclusion*

It has been seen that Germany and the Netherlands have established perhaps the closest bilateral army relationship in Europe, and certainly the deepest in terms of the mutualisation of military capabilities. It has been noted, however, that as regards mutualisation at temporal distance from the frontline, there is little of substance between the two states. It appears that the high asymmetry between them in terms of the scale and depth of indigenous defence industry militates against mutualisation. It is not in principle impossible, but it is unlikely given the disparity in scale and requirement. On the other hand, it has been seen that Dutch-German cooperation offers an innovative, although somewhat partial example of capability mutualisation



at the frontline. The 'modular integration' of Dutch and German forces means that different capabilities are provided to create a higher-level capability at division level.

The theory set out in this thesis suggests that if states are to embark on frontline mutualisation, then concrete interests must be very highly aligned. Yet the theory also suggests that such scenarios are rare, particularly vis-à-vis support for US-led operations. One important exception, however, is the 'negative interest' embodied in NATO's Article 5 mutual defence clause. It can be assumed that in the face of territorial aggression European allies would share the interest in deterring or repelling any attack. Thus, as interviewees note, Germany and the Netherlands have confidence in mutualising their capabilities at the division level, i.e., the kind of force structure necessary for territorial defence under Article 5. The modularity of the integration means, however, that the capabilities are extractable and thus flexibility for use in other missions is retained. One important *ad hoc* unit-level variable here is Germany's cultural reluctance (and relatedly, its lack of capability) to deploy expeditionary force at a scale comparable to that of the UK and France. In combination with the Dutch inability to do so, the mutualisation of such a capability is perhaps less of an issue of autonomy than it would be for the UK and France, as seen in relation to the CJEF.

The 1<sup>st</sup> German-Netherlands Headquarters provides something of a hybrid of frontline distance, it operates at zero-temporal distance from the frontline but its function provides some element of spatial distance. It is, however, a high level of mutualisation because it represents a shared capability that can only be deployed with the consent of both parties, and for which neither state has an alternative capability without the other. It is also a critical function at the heart of an operation and thus has a perhaps higher political profile. It is very difficult to imagine a scenario in which it could be deployed without a high level of commitment from both. Thus, for the use of this capability, concrete interests would have to be aligned, and thus it has more in common with the conception of mutualisation at the frontline, than functional distance of the kind that the Belgian and Dutch navies have established.

## **CHAPTER SEVEN**

### **CONCLUSIONS**

The concluding chapter to this thesis will now set out to bring together the case studies above and attempt to provide answers to the initial research questions. It will begin with a comparison of the case studies and the specific mutualisation initiatives within them. It will assess the extent to which structural-relational factors provide an explanation to the central puzzle of the thesis as to why some European states have foregone autonomy in favour of mutualising aspects of some of their most vital military capabilities. The second section of this chapter will then turn to the theoretical and empirical implications of these conclusions, and finally it will briefly discuss new avenues for future research that arise from the thesis.

#### **i. Military capability mutualisation: comparing cases**

This thesis has developed a novel theoretical approach derived from established neorealist concepts and assumptions. It claims that configurations of structural-relational variables at the system level exert independent effects on states, and that these effects can explain regularities or patterns of outcomes among states, in this case that of military capability mutualisation. A system theory can be tested on the basis that where different units interact under similar structural-relational configurations, unit behaviour and outcomes will tend 'to fall within certain expected ranges' (Waltz, 1979: 72). It is also argued, however, that while the dependent variable under consideration in this thesis is military capability mutualisation conceived of as a system-level outcome, it is also necessary to consider elements of behaviour at the unit-level, to gain a deeper understanding of how those outcomes come about, and thus to isolate systemic from unit-level causes. The following section will now consider the case studies examined above from a comparative perspective, and will attempt to demonstrate that the occurrence and variability in form of military capability mutualisation in contemporary Europe is shaped by structural-relational configurations.

### *The logic of behaviour: subordinate states under an asymmetric alliance*

Each case study chapter set out to first establish the degree to which the behaviour of the states under inquiry conformed to the expectations of the logic of behaviour under an asymmetric alliance. The framework for this analysis is the assumption, derived from theoretical premises, that states under an asymmetric alliance configuration tend to follow certain 'strategic ends', for which their military capabilities provide the means. Thus, subordinate states seek primarily to mitigate entrapment by the dominant state, secondarily to mitigate abandonment by the dominant state, and finally, to maintain military capabilities sufficient to defend their own residual or idiosyncratic interests. Unit-level factors that were judged to conflict with this explanation for behaviour, or provide an alternative explanation for it, were considered on an *ad hoc* basis, as raised in existing literature or through the interviews carried out for the thesis.

#### i. The struggle for influence – mitigating entrapment

As the theory expects, it has been shown that European states use their military capabilities primarily to pursue a 'struggle for influence' over the US, the dominant state in the highly asymmetric NATO alliance. While it has been seen that there is variation in the intensity by which the case study states pursue this strategy, all showed evidence of such behaviour. The behaviour is most pronounced in the case of the UK, with its military capabilities overtly recognised by decision-makers and analysts as the most important means by which to retain and build on its political influence with the US. In the case of France, it has been seen that since the end of the Cold War there has been a shift from a Gaullist focus on national military autonomy, which had bolstered French ambiguity over its role in the NATO alliance, towards an approach now remarkably like that pursued by the UK since the Suez crisis. Scholars and analysts of contemporary French defence policy have claimed that the 'end of the Suez paradigm' now enables deeper Franco-British cooperation (Pannier, 2015; De Durand, 2010). It has been argued here, however, that this shift ought not to be viewed as a radical change in politico-military strategy, but rather as a shift in tactics towards a different means of mitigation of entrapment in the light of the collapse of Cold War bipolarity and a shift to American unipolarity. Thus, while

France undoubtedly maintains strong aspirations to military autonomy and a commitment to the EU CSDP, as noted by several interviewees above, it has increasingly come to view its military capability through the prism of influence over the US.

Belgium and the Netherlands provide useful counter-points to French and British military power. While the UK and France have long maintained a broad spectrum of military capabilities and deployed their armed forces at considerable scale in Europe and around the world, Belgium and the Netherlands were neutral states before the Second World War. Yet within a few years of the formation of NATO their militaries had been transformed into significant force structures with a broad spectrum of military capability. In the post-war period they came to maintain a high degree of loyalty to the US. The Netherlands developed a particularly strong Atlanticism, using its military capabilities to demonstrate commitment and to seek to influence the US and its larger European partners. And, as has been seen, Dutch decision-makers continue to aspire for their armed forces to be viewed as part of the 'A-Team' of NATO, able to make high-end military contributions to warfighting across land, air and sea. By contrast, in Belgium the post-Cold War period has seen a marked retreat from the unswerving Atlanticist loyalty of the previous decades. Belgian decision-makers have oscillated between Atlanticism and a 'Europeanist' alternative to NATO. In tandem with this vision of autonomous European defence, Biscop has noted the effects of the identity of 'a small country' and of a tendency towards pacifism (Interview 14, 2016). These factors have surely made their mark on Belgian military capabilities. Belgium's defence spending as a proportion of GDP is among the lowest in NATO, and its army has abandoned its previously held heavy armour capabilities. Yet as was shown in the case study chapter above, despite this, the logic of military capability as a crucial means in the struggle for influence remains very strong among key decision-makers. And, as underlined by recent decisions on naval capability, Belgium still seeks to hold onto high-end capability contributions across a range of military capabilities (Chakraborty, 2016).

The political and military culture that Germany has inherited from its historical circumstances, and the impact this has on its military capabilities, has no parallel in Europe. Major constraints were imposed on German military capabilities as a

condition of its re-emergence as a sovereign state following the Second World War. Scholars and analysts have noted the importance of this unique culture in understanding Germany's defence policy and the attitudes of its decision-makers to the use of force. Duffield, for example, has argued that such is the strength of this culture that it serves to negate any explanation of German behaviour in terms of the neorealist conceptual vocabulary (1999). And indeed, Germany does not so readily deploy hard-edged war-fighting military capabilities as does, for example, France and the UK. Yet it has also been seen that the essential logic of the struggle for influence is equally applicable to German military capability, both in terms of responses from interviewees, and as seen in relation to the Bundeswehr's harder-edged deployments in Kosovo and Afghanistan.

Thus, it is argued that despite the significant differences among the case study states in terms of historical and cultural idiosyncrasies, the similarities between them in terms of their strategies for influence over the dominant state, and the impact this has on the generation and use of their military capabilities, is most striking. As made clear by several interviewees across the cases above, the key requirement for all the case study states is the retention of a 'balanced' or 'broad spectrum' of military capabilities. It is this that provides for the flexibility in the contribution that they may make in pursuit of influence and credibility in the eyes of the US. Yet it has also been seen that the ways in which these struggles for influence are pursued in any given concrete example may be very different. It is an assumption of the theory that under an asymmetric alliance configuration, there is a high level of policy flexibility among states. Thus, there is little pressure to deploy forces in exactly the same way, i.e., in terms of capability function, at exactly the same time, or even at all in some circumstances; quite the opposite, in fact. This low politico-military interdependence creates space for unit-level factors to play a greater role. The possibility of flexibility thus leads to divergent policy positions over support for the 'positive' interests of allies, particularly the US. There is, therefore, unpredictability in the extent to which a subordinate state will align with the concrete interests of the US.

Thus, even with identical strategic ends, the asymmetric alliance places a major constraint on possibilities for military capability mutualisation close to the frontline, as the expectation that interests will be shared to a high temporal and functional degree

is not guaranteed, and cannot be reliably predicted. As Biscop notes above in relation to Belgian support for US-led missions, 'it's entirely unpredictable, you can never call the trends' (Interview 14, June 2016). The same issue arises, even with a historically very reliable partner of the US like the UK as seen with its parliamentary veto on supporting US military action over Syria in 2013, and its refusal many decades earlier to commit forces to Vietnam. By contrast, where subordinate states can be more confident of aligned interests, such as in the 'negative interest' of NATO's Article 5 mutual defence clause, the impediment to frontline mutualisation ought not to be so great. Yet military capabilities tend not to be ear-marked to concrete interests in this way; and so, the possibility of divergent interests tends to obstruct the potential for mutualisation on the frontline. This inherent need for flexibility and the transferability of capabilities across interests is, as has been noted by practitioners such as Henius, a major obstacle to mutualisation through specialisation and sharing on the frontline (2012: 31).

## ii. Hedging against abandonment

The second element of the logic of behaviour in an asymmetric alliance is that of the need for a hedge against abandonment through the maintenance of military capabilities, and where plausible, their autonomous generation. This need to hedge relates to the residual uncertainty of the future in an anarchic international system, an inherent uncertainty that exists regardless of the apparent longevity of an alliance such as NATO. It has been seen that explicit recognition of a need for hedging in the form of retaining indigenous defence industries is apparent among British and French decision-makers. But it has also been noted that there are key differences in approach. The UK is, for example, more relaxed about dependencies on US industries, while France has embarked on significant industrial mutualisation with other European states. Thus, the assumption that retention of an autonomous defence industrial capacity is a 'strategic end' is not wholly corroborated by the evidence; there is an ambiguity among the larger case study states as to the ends of an indigenous defence industry. Is it for strategic or purely domestic economic reasons? Regarding Germany, some have argued above for the latter, regarding France the former (Interview 28, May 2015; Interview 5, March 2015). In the chapter above on France and the UK, some interviewees raised the difference in conception

as to which military capabilities ought to be indigenously supported was raised as a concern for the future of industrial collaboration (Interview 6, April 2015). It can be argued, however, that while it may not be a deciding factor, the retention of defence industrial capacity is at least a key criterion of decision-making in both the UK and France.

In Germany, the notion of retaining defence industrial capacity for strategic reasons has perhaps been something of a political taboo given that it would raise the prospect of planning for a post-NATO German military policy. Thus, there is some political ambiguity on this point in Germany, but the reality for the larger European states is that the economic and the strategic justification cannot be easily separated, and thus one may conceal the other. For the Netherlands and Belgium, the question is of a far lesser magnitude. While for the UK, France and Germany, an indigenous defence industrial base that preserves key technologies across a breadth of military capability remains an increasingly difficult but credible aspiration, it has never been credible for the Netherlands and Belgium in the post-war era and even before then. Thus, while there may be niche areas of focus, particularly for the Netherlands, the issue is less ambiguous and much more closely related to the domestic economy. This difference in scale of defence industry has important ramifications for the range of cooperation that is possible between states of different industrial capacities. While defence industrial initiatives are central to both the Franco-British and Dutch-Belgian case studies above, there appears to be far less scope for such cooperation between the Netherlands and Germany, perhaps in part because there is greater asymmetry in defence industrial requirements.

### iii. Maintaining capabilities for residual or idiosyncratic interests

The third strategic end of subordinate states under the asymmetric alliance is that of the retention of military capabilities for residual or idiosyncratic interests that are not related to the alliance. Here, only the UK and France maintain such a perspective, and the UK increasingly less so than it has in the past. Defence of the Falkland Islands remains a major expeditionary scenario for the UK, and for France autonomy of action in North Africa remains important (Government of France, 2013: 55). For Germany, the Netherlands and Belgium, a combination of lack of post-imperial

interests and relatively small-scale capabilities means that these states do not have such interests. The ability to mutualise capabilities for the most idiosyncratic of these residual interests, such as the British defence of the Falklands is likely to be low, given the obvious lack of common interest with any other partner. There may, however, be non-Article 5 interests in Europe and neighbouring regions over which the US does not act, but which European states believe requires a collective response. For such issues, without formal alliance arrangements to underpin them, the problem for European states is the degree to which their interests align. This alignment is once again susceptible to the problem of low politico-military interdependence. And, as Dyson has pointed out, European states tend to have different material interests in the wider European neighbourhood, and thus, the likelihood of frontline mutualisation of capabilities to defend these interests is also very low (2013a). It has been seen that interoperability initiatives such as the Franco-British Combined Joint Expeditionary Force are more likely to support state action in such scenarios as they do not entail any ongoing mutual dependence and can be deployed as and when necessary. All five states considered in the thesis, however, have residual 'self-help' interests in terms of responsibility for the basic territorial security of their airspace and waters. And, as has been shown, given that these responsibilities are largely fixed, there is a greater potential for 'frontline' mutualisation.

The preceding case study chapters have demonstrated that such a logic of behaviour provides a plausible explanation for the way in which European states generate and deploy their military capabilities. And, given the similarity of behaviour across states of different size, political leadership, culture and history, the claim that the generation and use of military capability is shaped by the effects of the asymmetric alliance configuration is plausible.

### *The logic of a crisis: means-ends strategies under pressure*

The second section of each case study chapter has shown how the sustainability of subordinate states' attempts to meet the strategic ends outlined above have come under great strain in recent years. It has been seen that the 2008 financial crisis provided a shock that exacerbated the fiscal impact of longer-term trends, pushing



efficiency and the preservation of military capability up the political agenda in several European states. The introductory chapter of the thesis set out the context for the increasing cost of military capabilities, which appears to be, at least for those states that seek a technological military edge over others, a system-wide phenomenon. Relatedly, it has been argued that it is primarily a need for greater efficiency that explains 'why in general' states have sought out capability mutualisation initiatives with others. The case study chapters thus set out to explore the very similar predicaments faced by the European states under consideration. While the impact of the financial crisis was not even across all the states considered, in combination with the long-term accumulation of affordability issues and the gradual erosion of capabilities through 'salami slicing', it has been argued that it led to a situation of a broadly comparable crisis in each case study.

The capability affordability crisis has been conceptualised in this thesis as a means-ends crisis. As has been seen across the states considered here, it was not a direct fear of insecurity, but rather one of a fear of losing influence or 'credibility' in the eyes of the US, that primarily pushed the states to action. This concern was further exacerbated by the overstretch of European armed forces in the operational theatres of Iraq and Afghanistan. Thus, as shown in the chapters above, it was the risk to the 'balanced' or 'full spectrum' status of European armed forces that was the greatest concern within the case study states. As with the logic of behaviour identified above, the notion of a logic of crisis is not made at the exclusion of unit-level variables. Indeed, it is surely impossible to consider the question of the resourcing of defence budgets from a solely systemic perspective. As noted in the introduction, and as Alan Milward argued, the resources a state dedicates to its armed forces must be considered as a strategic synthesis of domestic and international factors (Milward, 1979: 18). For contemporary European states, there are increasingly strong demands for spending on social security, health, education and infrastructure. Yet the considerable similarities in the predicaments of European states suggest that systemic factors are also vital. It is striking that while the states considered above spend different shares of their GDP on defence, the difference between them is all within a single percentage point (see tables in chapters 4-6). And this similar effect ought to be expected under the asymmetric alliance configuration where strategic ends create pressures to maintain defence spending, but where security is

asymmetrically provided by the dominant state, and where marginal extra investment by all states, particularly the smallest of states, is systemically negligible (Waltz, 1979; 169).

Given the means-ends crisis outlined above and explored in detail in the case study chapters, it has been assumed that the primary aim of capability mutualisation is that of efficiency. But this general assumption must be qualified. Historically in Europe, there are other motivations for close defence cooperation that may involve aspects of mutualisation. Major European defence industrial collaborations, for example the NH90 helicopter, also have very strong diplomatic dimensions (Krotz, 2011: 74). And the problems of multinational collaboration are well-documented in terms of cost increases and delays that may be so high as to negate efficiency entirely (Hartley, 2011). Once more, however, these issues reflect the ambiguity and the difficulty in separating the strategic from the economic. Efficiency simply conceived of as a unit-cost price for a piece of military equipment might be better served by buying it 'off the shelf' from American industry. But this would not account for any negative impact on indigenous civil manufacturing, input into the domestic economy and matters of military autonomy. Thus, efficiency in this wider sense means meeting a broad set of economic and military criteria. And ultimately, collaboration may be the only means of preserving technological autonomy in any given field of capability; this is certainly the view of interviewees and analysts as regards Franco-British cooperation on FCAS and complex weapons.

The case that the efficiency motive is dominant in the cases above is more easily made for mutualisation in functional aspects of capabilities at a distance from the frontline, and that directly on the frontline. Here, specialisation and sharing have led to considerable savings because a significant cost is shared or forgone entirely. Such examples considered in case study chapters above include Franco-British shared nuclear weapons testing facilities, the sharing of air defence between Netherlands and Belgium, the shared 1<sup>st</sup> Germany-Netherlands Corps Headquarters and specialisation in support services to Dutch and Belgian frigates. In these cases, the evidence set out above points to high levels of efficiencies.

Finally, it has been seen that the political imperative for efficiency is not the same across all case study states. In the Netherlands, Belgium, France and the UK, capabilities were at risk of disappearance or being very seriously curtailed; in Germany, such a risk was not so urgent. For Germany, there is also perhaps a more political case for defence cooperation as a component or building block of wider European defence, a conception that was much weaker or absent across other states, wherein the focus was almost exclusively on maintaining a broad range of military capabilities. It has been seen that this more political 'vision' from Germany is apparent in the notion of the 'framework nation concept'. Yet German interviewees also emphasised that the long-term constraints of capability affordability were essentially the same and that greater efficiency was therefore required from Germany as much as for any other European state. Thus, despite unit-level differences among the case study states, the 'logic of crisis' was pervasive across them all as the context for moves towards deeper cooperation with partners.

### *The logic of mutualisation – military capability initiatives in contemporary Europe*

This section has thus far argued that the similarities across the cases considered in depth in this thesis suggest evidence for a systemic shaping of state behaviour towards the pursuit of certain strategic ends within an asymmetric alliance. And it has argued that systemic factors can help explain the logic of a crisis in the sustainability of the military capabilities required to meet those ends. The final section of each chapter has sought to demonstrate how this logic of behaviour is compatible with a search for efficiency through capability mutualisation. This section of each chapter has been guided by three formal hypotheses, as they relate directly to explanation of the outcome under investigation, which is that of military capability mutualisation and the reason for its occurrence and its variation in form.

#### *i. Capability mutualisation at temporal distance from the frontline*

The first hypothesis draws on the assumption of durability in an asymmetric alliance configuration and the flexibility that this creates for states to mutualise aspects of the generation of their military capabilities at a temporal distance from the frontline:

H1: Aspects of capability mutualisation may be found at high temporal distance from the frontline, with or without a high alignment of concrete interests.

This form of capability mutualisation takes place at a temporal remove from frontline action for concrete interests; as such, it does not create risks for future situations where concrete interests diverge. Capability mutualisation at this point in the generation of capabilities may support all the strategic ends identified above, and the concrete interests that flow from them, even where those ends may be pursued differently by partner states, for example, in the case of support for the dominant state or the pursuit of a state's idiosyncratic interests. Confidence in the durability of the alliance provides subordinate states a means by which they can more efficiently hedge against abandonment by retaining their indigenous defence industrial capacity. These concrete forms of temporal mutualisation may take the form of defence industrial collaboration or shared infrastructure and facilities required for the generation of capabilities. The initiatives explored in the previous chapters broadly confirm the expectation that this form of capability mutualisation is undertaken with the aim of improving efficiency, and without great concern over entrapment or abandonment risks. In line with the hypothesis, interviewees did not express any concern that this form of mutualisation would embroil their governments in the divergent interests of their partners.

Thus, the element of temporal distance from the frontline, underpinned by the inherent durability of the dominant-subordinate configuration, does seem to provide a high degree of mitigation of entrapment and abandonment risks such that states may enter into mutual dependence arrangements for the generation of their military capabilities. This has been shown to be the case across a range of Franco-British initiatives, including FCAS, missile cooperation and nuclear weapons testing, and in the Dutch-Belgian agreement to jointly procure new frigates and MCM vessels. Investigation into the case studies has, however, also identified three important nuances to this conclusion. These include the depth of mutual dependence when it applies not only to the generation of a concrete capability but to the ability to generate that kind of capability well into the future; the relationship between the degree of temporal distance from the frontline and concrete interests; and finally, as

noted above, the assumption that states retain defence industrial capacity for strategic security ends.

The first issue relates to the depth of mutualisation in the generation of military capabilities. Here it is important to note that there are significant differences between large and small states. Whereas France, and to a lesser degree the UK, have long sought to retain autonomy over the design and production of key military capabilities, smaller states have either never been able to do this or have lost the ability in recent years. A prime example is that of defence aerospace. In the post-war period, France has been able to design and build its principal fighter jets autonomously. And, while the UK has collaborated with other European states on its principal fighter jet, most recently the Typhoon, in doing so it has retained considerable onshore capability. Thus, while the UK may have specialised within the design and production of the Typhoon, it has in principle retained the ability to design its own aircraft. As has been explained in the chapters above, however, the future viability of such onshore capacity in both states is now in extreme doubt. The Franco-British initiative on FCAS thus goes further than capability mutualisation within a single project. If it goes ahead, it is expected to sustain the ability of both states to maintain a significant defence aerospace capacity. And in the field of missile production, the two states have made a commitment to specialise aspects of industrial production. Whereas in the past Franco-British defence industrial cooperation may have been concerned with the efficiency of particular programmes, it now appears to be concerned with the very survival of defence industrial capacity. This takes mutualisation to a much deeper level, whereby it is not only a given programme that is at issue, but the industry itself. This raises further issues.

It may then be that France and the UK are helping each other to hedge against abandonment and to preserve the higher level of operational autonomy that comes from an indigenous capability. This creates a significant new mutual dependence between the two states. On one hand this may, as assumed throughout this thesis, demonstrate considerable confidence in the durability of the alliance. It may also be, however, that this confidence goes beyond even that of the durability of the asymmetric alliance configuration, a possibility hinted at in the words of the senior British official who said that there was an element of 'reinsurance' vis-à-vis the US in

the Lancaster House treaties (Interview 5, March 2015). Thus, *in extremis*, i.e., in a return to a European regional anarchy where the UK and France no longer had confidence in each other's intentions, they would have helped each other to sustain indigenous capability to a point where it might be possible to reconstitute a fully autonomous capacity. This kind of industrial mutualisation thus most prominently meets the strategic end of hedging against an uncertain future.

Secondly, it has been seen that the *degree* of temporal distance from the frontline may affect the level of risk in any given initiative. While there is little concern over defence industrial cooperation from the perspective of entrapment and abandonment dilemmas, this concern is more sensitive to temporality to the frontline. It has been seen that Franco-British cooperation over the design and production of missiles entails a greater element of risk in that it will lead to mutual dependencies in security of supply. The distance of such production from the frontline, however, combined with autonomous war-stocks, the durability of the alliance and a likely (though not certain) expectation of aligned concrete interests, thus significantly reduces entrapment and abandonment risks.

Finally, there is the question of the motives for states to retain indigenous defence industries. The theory assumes that the primary motivation is a strategic one, i.e., for purposes of autonomy, and that mutualisation is therefore driven by a need to maintain strategic ends more efficiently. In empirical reality, however, the motivation to retain an indigenous defence industry is complex and multi-causal. Arguments have been found in the analyses above to support the contention that such a motivation is primarily strategic for the UK and France, but a plausible case can also be made that the reasons are primarily economic. As such, the challenges to bilateral defence industrial cooperation, which are made plain in the case of Franco-British cooperation, may emanate equally or even more from the 'unit level' because domestic economic policy must take priority. Thus, there may be an expectation that different states' policies will be very different and embody diverse policy choices over the balance between efficiency and security needs. Likewise, the Netherlands and Belgium will use domestic capacity to build their new ships not primarily for security reasons but rather than to ensure the resources are spent within their own economies so far as is possible. Regarding Germany, it has been difficult to

demonstrate that there is any clear policy commitment to sustaining a defence industry as a hedge against an uncertain future, although this will happen as a *de facto*, perhaps unintentional result of sustaining a defence industry for economic reasons.

In the case of the UK and France, however, the question is more open. And it is a crucial point, because if states hold different views as to the purpose for retaining industrial capacity then that may threaten future mutualisation initiatives. As seen in the chapter on Franco-British cooperation, if the UK were to make the decision that it could more efficiently procure certain capabilities from the US and dropped a strategic requirement for onshore capability then that may well endanger future cooperation with France, assuming that France maintained its current approach to industrial autonomy. At the time of writing, there does appear to be a shared commitment to the view that operational autonomy is underpinned by indigenous capability, and that it provides a hedge against an uncertain future. It has been seen that both the UK and France both have sufficiently similar conceptions of operational sovereignty and their industrial indigenous requirements to embark on a number of defence industrial initiatives. Yet in empirical actuality this will always be a relative question and may apply differently to different capabilities; an alternative way to meet the means-ends gaps is to buy directly from the US. If this were to occur in ever more areas of capability then the alignment would begin to break down. Thus, in the field of defence industrial cooperation, when it comes to the causal components of the decision to undertake any given mutualisation initiative, unit level factors are likely to be as important as structural-relational factors.

Capability mutualisation at temporal distance from the frontline thus rests on alliance durability, but deeper industrial mutualisation may also provide a 're-insurance' hedge against abandonment by the dominant state in future. It means that states can retain some technological expertise albeit through mutual dependence on another. It has also been seen that symmetry between states in terms of the scale of their defence industrial capacity may also affect the likelihood of mutualisation at temporal distance. This is because alignment of a capability requirement is also necessary, and this helps to explain why there were no major industrial mutualisation initiatives between Germany and the Netherlands. While the asymmetry of scale of the two

states does not rule out such cooperation, it makes it less likely in comparison to the other case studies considered wherein the partner states are more equally balanced in terms of defence industrial requirements.

## ii. Capability mutualisation on the frontline

The second hypothesis builds on the assumption that there is confidence in alliance durability and that there is an alignment of capability requirement, but that for capability mutualisation to occur on the frontline, concrete interests must also be temporally and functionally aligned to a very high degree:

H2: Capability mutualisation may be found at the frontline where there is a very high certainty of support for concrete interests.

Of the three forms of capability mutualisation considered over the previous chapters, examples of 'frontline' mutualisation are the scarcest among the wider universe of cases (see Tables 3.1. and 3.2). There are two major constraints on frontline mutualisation, both of which have been explained as effects of the structural-relational configurations outlined above. First, it has been argued that for states to mutualise frontline capabilities they must have a very high expectation that their concrete interests will be temporally identical and be met with a broadly equivalent functional contribution. This is a high bar to set for any concrete initiative, and indeed, is at odds with most situations in which subordinate states would expect to deploy their military capabilities. Secondly, even where concrete interests might feasibly be aligned in such a way as, for example, the territorial defence of NATO states under the Article 5 mutual defence clause, military capabilities are transferable across different interests. For example, a British armoured brigade might undertake duties in Estonia, ostensibly under NATO's Article 5 commitment, but might also be expected to be deployed for many other contingencies, including those outside of Europe. In an alliance where policy flexibility is high, capabilities are unlikely to be earmarked to concrete interests. These two constraints explain why frontline mutualisation is not widespread; they also, however, explain why it is possible in certain situations.



The case study chapters have demonstrated why combined multi-national forces are based not on mutualisation but on aggregation with a focus on improved interoperability. The Franco-British combined force demonstrates the limits of mutualisation for frontline deployment. Although it seeks deeper interoperability and may draw on the various strengths of the partners, the forces remain wholly separable. This form of cooperation may provide a way for states to aggregate their military capabilities in support of their strategic ends of mitigating entrapment by the dominant state, in this case the US, but the significant efficiencies of mutualisation through specialisation and sharing are unavailable to this form of cooperation. Even though decision-makers in the UK and France understand it is likely that they will deploy their forces for the same mission in support of the US or other allies, they cannot be wholly certain. As a senior French official involved in the Lancaster House negotiations remarks on Franco-British military cooperation, 'It's a bit of a third way between pretending that we can do things on our own and accepting the implications of becoming dependent on a partner' (Interview 9, June 2016). While some scholars and analysts have hailed France's apparent emulation of a more British approach to the US as a 'strategic convergence', and the 'end of the Suez paradigm', (De Durand, 2010; Pannier, 2016), there remain very considerable limits on effectively concerting their capabilities to meet their strategic ends more efficiently.

This effect of the asymmetric alliance also explains why the otherwise exceptionally close Dutch-Belgian naval cooperation has its limits. Interviewees do not believe it possible, for example, to fully specialise in capabilities, for example to have Dutch frigates and Belgian MCM assets that would serve both states; nor do they believe it possible to fully share their ships to create a completely integrated 'Dutch-Belgian navy' (Interview 25: June 2014). As has been demonstrated, however, the structural-relational configurations considered in this thesis do not completely rule out frontline specialisation. The Benelux air policing agreement demonstrates that a capability may be mutualised for a 'frontline' concrete interest, in this case the defence of national airspace. How then is it possible for two states to rely on each other for such a sensitive security task as air policing? After all, it is a responsibility made more pressing by recent terrorist attacks in Belgium and the risks from the use of hijacked airliners as deadly weapons is well understood. The answer is provided for by the structural-relational configuration and the nature of the concrete interest itself.

First, the problem of the transferability of capability across interests is not at issue here because territorial air policing relies on military capabilities that are permanently assigned to the task. And secondly, in terms of the task itself, the concrete interests of the two states are temporally and functionally identical; both states need to be able to act immediately and with the same capability function. Under these circumstances, then, frontline mutualisation of capabilities is possible. And there is also an element of this form of cooperation in German-Netherlands army cooperation. As explored, the integration of the Dutch air mobile brigade into the German rapid reaction division is not likely to be tested outside of an Article 5 commitment. Thus, while the component capability parts remain separable and therefore autonomous, it can be argued that the commitment to deploy the division as a mutualised force in an Article 5 scenario can be taken as reliable by both parties because of identical temporal and functional interests.

Regarding the role of *ad hoc* unit-level variables, interviewees for Dutch-German Army cooperation emphasised long-standing geographical and functional cooperation over logistics and training during the Cold War. Yet it can be argued that the Netherlands and Germany are no more well-aligned in terms of their cultural attitudes to the use of force than any other states under consideration in this thesis. The more reliable guide to their behaviour is that set out above, i.e., the structural-relational configuration. The comparison of initiatives with zero distance from the frontline, accepting that the number of cases are few, suggests that, as expected by the theory, it is not strategic culture that allows for mutualisation on the frontline but rather the reliable alignment of concrete interests. And this appears to be aided by those interests being fixed, either strategically in the sense that Article 5 territorial defence remains a bedrock commitment of NATO, or in terms of a fixed role, such as that of territorial air defence.

### iii. Capability mutualisation at functional distance from the frontline

The final hypothesis is based on the theoretical claim that low politico-military interdependence within the alliance leads to high policy flexibility and that this,

together with the assumption of alliance durability and an alignment of capability requirement, enables mutualisation at a 'functional distance' from the frontline:

H3: Capability mutualisation may be found at functional distance from the frontline, with or without high certainty of support for concrete interests.

It has been argued that low politico-military interdependence and therefore high policy flexibility tends to frustrate the possibility of frontline capability mutualisation. Flexibility does, however, enable another form of mutualisation which may occur at the mid-point in the chain of capability generation and deployment, i.e., with those military capabilities that play a supporting role to the frontline, for example, air and sea transportation or air-to-air refuelling, and those support functions within frontline capabilities, for example, for the maintenance of a frigate or fighter aircraft. The foregoing case studies have provided examples of this form of mutualisation, the most striking of which is the 'BENESAM' cooperation between Belgium and the Netherlands. Here, mission critical maintenance support has been specialised for the frigates and MCM vessels of the two navies.

The entrapment and abandonment risk from such mutualisation is deemed low because even if the parties' interests have diverged, leaving only one state taking part in a mission, the other will be able to support it without, or with minimal, political controversy. This form of mutualisation does entail risks, however. There may be political embarrassment from being seen to enable a mission that the state does not agree with. Furthermore, the definition of what constitutes the 'frontline' is relative to the nature of threats. It may be that frigates in the Mediterranean are at less risk than soldiers patrolling on the ground in a hostile environment. But it is plausible that threats will shift and that the risk to ships or to airbases may become greater than it is today.

The *ad hoc* mutual reliance between France and the UK noted in Chapter Four works on a similar functional principle. While there is no *within capability* mutualisation, there is a form of *quid pro quo* mutual dependence in, for example, the UK's reliance on France to cover for its lack of maritime patrol aircraft and France's reliance on the UK for strategic airlift into Mali. The two states thus cover

capability gaps on an *ad hoc* basis. This is not a formalised mutual reliance but can work because of the functional distance of the capabilities involved. The example of the 1<sup>st</sup> Germany-Netherlands Corps HQ is something of a hybrid between zero distance and functional distance from the frontline. While there is zero temporal distance from the frontline, given that the capability is exercised at a functional distance, the political risks in its deployment are considerably less. On the other hand, given that there is zero temporal distance from the frontline, there still remains a very high degree of mutuality in the arrangement, and thus a degree of entrapment and abandonment risk. As with previous examples, some interviewees raised the issue of close cultural proximity and strong historical foundations for cooperation. Yet, one again, this explanation has its limits, in part because functional mutualisation is, in itself, indicative of the constraints that states operate within. If cultural similarities were sufficient to conquer fears of entrapment and abandonment, then mutualisation would surely go to far greater depths than it does.

Capability mutualisation at a functional distance from the frontline is thus based on the inherent flexibility within the alliance. In contrast to some of the views of practitioners and analysts set out in the introduction, the explanation above argues that rather than the requirement for flexibility being an inherent block on specialisation or sharing, as argued, for example, by Henius, it may in fact be an enabling factor in certain circumstances. Because subordinate states have considerable politico-military flexibility within an asymmetric alliance they can support each other without making commitments to join each other on the frontline. Thus, these examples provide concrete evidence of the possibility of functional cooperation raised by Giegerich and Diesen above, and the theory provides a plausible explanation as to why such cooperation is possible and the limits to which it will be subject.

## **ii. Research questions revisited**

It is now appropriate to return to the research questions set out at the beginning of this thesis and assess the extent to which plausible answers have been provided.

*Why have European states forgone their autonomy and willingly put themselves into a condition of mutual dependence for the generation and deployment of some of their most vital military capabilities?*

*Why is it that European states have sought out such arrangements at all, i.e., what is it that precipitates the search for mutually dependent capabilities?*

*What is it that gives the partners confidence in their mutual support for each other?*

It was argued at the outset of the thesis that the key issue at the heart of the puzzle is that of the reliability of expectations between states for mutual support. To explain how such expectations can be believed to be strong enough for capability mutualisation to be undertaken, and why those expectations may vary under different circumstances, thus leading to different forms of military capability mutualisation, a novel theoretical approach has been developed. This has been achieved by drawing on established neorealist concepts and Snyder's conception of process variables to develop structural-relational configurations of system-level variables that enable and constrain state opportunities for mutualisation.

The thesis has shown that comparison of quite different states under the same systemic conditions supports the claim that these configurations exert independent effects that lead to variable outcomes at the system level. While these effects do not *determine* cases of mutualisation, they do provide significant systemic incentives and disincentives to states who wish to gain greater efficiency from their military capabilities through cooperation with others. The thesis is based on a theoretical perspective of international politics as a bounded domain of action and outcomes at a systemic level, thus it does not provide a comprehensive answer to the question of what causes any specific historical case. In theoretical terms this would be an infinitely complex undertaking because it would need to consider myriad variables. Yet in mapping the systemic constraints and opportunities for capability mutualisation, the theory can offer considerable insight and utility; the theoretical and empirical implications of the theory will be considered in more detail in the following section.

The theoretical approach developed in this thesis thus provides a significant contribution to literature on contemporary European defence cooperation, and more particularly to the development of neorealist explanations for phenomena in this field of study. First, it tackles the absence of a formal definition of the phenomenon of capability mutualisation, which is an essential step if the full potential of an avowedly theoretical investigation is to be realised. Secondly, the thesis has found a plausible way to overcome the challenge of understanding why subordinate states in an asymmetric alliance will have sufficiently strong confidence in each other to mutualise capabilities in different ways and in different circumstances. It was seen at the outset of this thesis that scholars and analysts have tended to focus on 'strategic culture' or 'threat perceptions' as the key variables in European defence cooperation, particularly regarding the deployment of capabilities, though less so the generation of capabilities. This thesis has shown that explanations relating to convergence or divergence in cultures may have important explanatory contributions to make in any specific historical outcome of capability mutualisation. But it has been argued that structural-relational variables of relative military power, levels of interdependence, forms of capability and an instrumental view of concrete interests provide greater granularity, reliability and a more plausible explanation as to why and how states will embark on military capability mutualisation.

As argued at the outset of this thesis, an alignment of culture may well be present in some of the cases, but it is difficult to see how it would wholly mitigate doubts over expectations of future support, even in a case built on longstanding historical cooperation such as that of Belgium and the Netherlands. And it has been seen that while it may be that France has moved closer to British policy vis-à-vis the US, the degree to which this will enable deeper defence cooperation on the frontline can perhaps be exaggerated by analysts and scholars (De Durand, 2010; Jones, 2011; Pannier, 2016). This is because, as has been seen, action in support of the US tends to be highly unpredictable and thus a hindrance rather than a help to mutualisation, at least as far as frontline capabilities and combined forces are concerned.

The theoretical approach developed above has also found a way to move beyond the limitations of explanations that focus on divergence and convergence of 'threat perception' to understand the likelihood of deep defence cooperation over military

capabilities. As argued above, while there are also meta-theoretical issues around the use of threat perception as a variable in conjunction with neorealism, the main issue is that subordinate states in an asymmetric alliance may support the dominant state for reasons other than threat perceptions. Indeed, if the primary aim is mitigation of entrapment by the dominant state through influence, then much of the generation and deployment of military capabilities will be shaped by this need, not necessarily by the recognition of specific threats. Thus, this thesis has instead developed an approach that views 'concrete interests' as instrumental to strategic ends, themselves shaped by the nature of the alliance security dilemma in an asymmetric alliance. In this way, whether a subordinate state supports the dominant state or indeed another ally, is a result of an assessment of its concrete interests in the framework of its strategic ends, not via threat perception. And importantly, this approach demonstrates how concrete interests are derived, at least in part, from the position of a state within an alliance. This is a systemic view of interest formation, rather than simply a dyadic or 'bilateral' approach to convergence of interests between states.

Finally, the theoretical approach undertaken in this thesis demonstrates that it is possible for neorealism, broadly conceived, to explain military capability mutualisation. A crucial theoretical conclusion is that the controversy over state sovereignty and the mutualisation of capabilities can be resolved, and its relevance to the issue put into perspective. As noted in chapter one, some scholars argue that the problem of 'national sovereignty' explains the limits on mutual dependence through specialisation and sharing (Terlikowski, 2010: 3; Howorth, 2011: 5; Dyson, 2012: 21); and some have argued that states naturally seek to 'maximise' autonomy (Baumann, 2001). The theoretical approach undertaken in this thesis assumes, in line with Waltzian neorealism, that the core concept of sovereignty, or what might be termed sovereignty-autonomy, is defined as the ultimate political authority of the state, and this remains absolute and indivisible. This conception of state sovereignty does not imply that states must therefore seek fully autonomous military capabilities in all circumstances.

On the contrary, it has been shown that the extent of autonomy that a state may require for the generation and deployment of its military capabilities is conditional

upon its systemic environment, as set out in the form of configurations of structural-relational variables. Seen from this perspective, the constraints on the mutualisation of military capabilities are not chiefly those of 'national sovereignty' *sui generis*, but rather the extent of self-help pressures, the degree of interdependence with allies and the extent to which concrete interests may be aligned. Simply put, the propensity towards, or aversion from, mutual dependence for military capabilities is not best explained in terms of sovereignty, but by a state's structural-relational context. Such a conclusion suggests that it would be better for scholars, at least those concerned with defence cooperation, to dispense with notions of the 'maximisation' of sovereignty or its apparent erosion and dilution. Neorealist analysis need not mean a proscription on the possibility of mutual dependence for military capabilities. On the contrary, it may offer the best explanation for such an outcome.

#### *Important events beyond the temporal purview of the thesis*

Some recent events may be construed to pose a challenge to some of the key assumptions and conclusions of this thesis. There is not sufficient space to go into detail on events that are beyond the temporal purview of this thesis, but they may be considered in brief. First, in 2014 Russia invaded and occupied Crimea and parts of eastern Ukraine. Did European states respond to an apparently greater Russian threat in a way consistent or inconsistent with the theoretical assumptions outlined above? Certainly, there was a reaction from NATO states in the form of a new strategy for the defence of the alliance's eastern flank, which now includes 'forward presence' and 'pre-positioning' of forces; there have also been renewed commitments to greater spending (NATO, 2014). It is hard to argue against the view that such responses are due to shifts in threat perceptions. But this does not undermine the explanatory power of the theory above.

Indeed, the theory assumes that increments of European NATO spending are of little systemic consequence. Thus, it can be argued that the increases in spending have not been significant in relation to the gravity of Russia's invasion and its apparent contempt for the post-Cold War consensus on European security. In fact, the behaviour is in line with that of subordinate states in an asymmetric alliance. Fresh commitments to defence are as much about retention of credibility in the eyes of the



US as they are about a response to the Russian threat. And the US did not abandon Europe to the increased threat but responded by returning an armoured brigade following years of decline in the US military presence (Barnes and Lubold, 2015). It remains the case that for European NATO states the primary strategic end is to mitigate entrapment through influence and reputation.

A second major event that has developed beyond the temporal purview of this thesis is the election of Donald Trump as President of the US, which has, in part triggered the third event, which is an apparent rejuvenation of the EU's CSDP. These events may for some cast doubt on the core assumptions of NATO as a durable asymmetric alliance with the primary goal of subordinate states to pursue a 'struggle for influence' over the dominant state. Trump appeared to cast doubt on the US commitment to NATO, although more recently he and senior American military figures reaffirmed that commitment (Shotter, 2017). Meanwhile European states, most notably Germany, have directly questioned the reliability of the US itself (Henley, 2017). There has thus been renewed interest in the CSDP as a means to bolster European military capabilities and scope for autonomous action. It is too soon to tell if these events mark a decisive break with what has been claimed in this thesis to be a pervasive logic of behaviour since the formation of NATO. The author notes, however, that for European states to do anything more than hedge against US abandonment, i.e., to assume full responsibility for their own security collectively, then radical changes in defence spending and politico-military organisation that would go far beyond any current EU defence initiatives would surely be expected. No such changes have yet occurred. Thus, while changed threat perceptions and renewed fears of abandonment are no doubt present in contemporary Europe, the theoretical approach laid out in this thesis remains a robust means for analysis.

### *Limitations of data gathering and analysis*

As illustrated above, this thesis has drawn on a wide range of empirical materials, including thirty elite-level interviews, and it has developed a novel theoretical approach to the study of capability mutualisation. The data gathered for the thesis does, however, suffer from some limitations that need now to be recognised. The first limitation on the data used in this thesis is the low number of mutualisation

cases. The foregoing discussion has sought to test the structural-relational theory on the basis that similar conditions lead to similar behaviour, and has attempted to separate systemic from *ad hoc* variables. In terms of the 'logic of behaviour' and the 'logic of crisis' there is plentiful evidence available to justify this approach in the form of historical examples and data points on defence spending. By contrast, there are only a few cases of capability mutualisation of each form, i.e., temporal, functional and zero distance from the frontline. In aggregate, however, and considered as examples of mutualisation as a discrete phenomenon, the principal cases presented in the case studies above do provide a reasonable comparative cross-section.

Furthermore, while the number of case studies in each category of mutualisation remain scarce, the application of the theory does not necessarily require comparative corroboration to be plausible as an explanation. As Waltz argued, it is also legitimate to test a system theory 'by seeing whether things work in the way the theory suggests' (1997: 916). Thus, while it would be preferable to have greater numbers of cases to hand to make a comparison-based claim for the independent effects of structural-relational configurations on each form of mutualisation, the theory can at least provide for a plausible explanation. Indeed, regarding the forms of cooperation set out above, no comparably convincing arguments present themselves from the empirical evidence considered. Furthermore, there are more cases to investigate, and policy developments suggest they are likely to proliferate. This will provide a greater number of cases to investigate in future.

Another drawback with the data selected is the limited geographical sample of European states. As argued in the chapter on methodology, this limitation is in large part due to the lack of sufficiently well-developed cases elsewhere in Europe. But it does mean that the claim that the logic of structural-relational configurations outlined here must be caveated on the basis that as cases arise elsewhere in Europe they would need to be examined against the theory set out in this thesis. A further point of geographical and political limitation is that of limiting the scope of the thesis to European NATO states. A further test of the thesis would be to apply it to non-European but similar structural-relational configurations. More research would be required to assess whether such case studies exist, but this may be fruitful and this

possibility, together with other further avenues of exploration to address the shortcomings of the approach taken in this thesis is examined in more detail below.

Finally, the theoretical approach itself limits the scope of the available data. While it has been attempted to bring in unit level factors on an *ad hoc* basis as they have arisen in the evidence, this has meant that these factors have not been treated in as systematic fashion as other theoretical perspectives might have approached them. A further narrowing of the focus of the thesis is caused by the theoretical approach to interests. Interests are defined as instrumental and based on the narrow rationality of neorealism, i.e., derived from the ultimate objective of 'survival'. It is the case, however, that states act on other motives besides instrumental interests relating to their security. The simplification of state motives is a theoretical device to allow for greater parsimony of analysis; it is only claimed that such a logic of behaviour is sufficiently strong to create patterns or regularity in behaviour and outcomes over time, not that it is the only basis of state action in international politics. Nevertheless, this is a downside to the parsimony of the approach. Some of the implications of these more theoretical issues will now be considered below.

### **iii. Implications of the theory and areas for further research**

#### *Theoretical and practical implications*

The preceding development and application of a theory of military capability mutualisation allows for the modification of neorealist thought to include the possibility that self-help does not always rule out the more efficient provision of security through specialisation and sharing of capabilities at the international level. It is possible to view the greater significance of the foregoing theoretical development and analysis as a confirmation that the general neorealist proscription against capability mutualisation appears to remain, at least for the most part, quite robust. And, given that the number of cases of mutualisation remain limited relative to the breadth and scale of most European armed forces' capabilities, and particularly regarding the deployment of frontline military forces, there may be some truth in such an observation. Yet a theoretical explanation for capability mutualisation is more important than this, for it shines a light on the possibilities and limitations for further

initiatives of this kind, and thus for the scope for further European defence cooperation based on mutualisation. Indeed, it is theoretically plausible, though it remains very challenging in practice, to envisage European armed forces becoming considerably more efficient whilst retaining the flexibility that is inherent in their configurational circumstances. The prospects for the three forms of mutualisation can, therefore, be usefully considered with the aid of the theoretical perspective.

First, the theory suggests that the barriers to capability mutualisation at temporal remove from the frontline relate primarily to the local alignment of capability requirements; after this, unit level factors become critical, particularly negotiating around differences in domestic industrial policies, and pushing cooperation through potentially resistant domestic interest groups. For the mutualisation of frontline capabilities, the theory suggests that there may be more scope for initiatives that respond to situations where the interests of the partner states are temporally and functionally aligned, and thus where the role of the capability is more tightly fixed, as seen, for example, in BENELUX air defence cooperation. Such an observation suggests that there may be further opportunities for the mutualisation of basic territorial defence responsibilities among European states.

Regarding the mutualisation of frontline capabilities into binational or multinational forces, the theory suggests that any such initiatives that are designed to mitigate entrapment through support to the dominant state, in this case the US, are unlikely to provide a fruitful context for capability mutualisation. As has been explored, the theory suggests that the EU's CSDP, conceived of by several scholars and policy makers as a means of mitigating entrapment and abandonment by the US, is highly likely to be bedevilled by such problems. Similar limitations also apply to the Franco-British combined joint force. This does not, however, mean that such forces do not provide useful options for participating states, including that of aggregating their forces more effectively for use in US-led operations. In theoretical terms, however, the high flexibility of policy that is open to subordinate states in the face of military action led by the dominant state seriously undermines the reliability of such an approach, and makes it an unlikely forum for frontline capability mutualisation.

It has been argued, however, that this aspect of mutualisation supports the possibility of more efficient organisation of allied territorial defence. It has been seen that where concrete interests are expected to be aligned to a high temporal and functional degree then they can be mutualised up to the frontline. Perhaps, then, it would be feasible to create highly integrated NATO forces with earmarked capabilities that are specifically charged with Article 5 responsibilities, for example with heavy armour that is likely to be of limited use for 'out of area' expeditionary operations. To some degree this is already implied by the model of Germany-Netherlands army cooperation at the division level, but it could perhaps go further. While such arrangements would considerably reduce the flexibility of a participant's capabilities, decision-makers may consider a trade-off in flexibility for efficiency to be worthwhile. And, according to the theoretical approach outlined above, it would not open up significant new entrapment and abandonment dilemmas.

Regarding mutualisation at functional distance from the frontline, while the constraints are considerable, there may also be significant scope for such this form of cooperation. To mutualise support services to military capabilities such as the maintenance of ships and aircraft, participating states are likely to need to have identical equipment and to use it in a similar way, i.e., with similar doctrine and concepts of operations. This raises a high material and conceptual bar. On the other hand, as BENESAM naval cooperation demonstrates, such cooperation can maintain highly reliable capabilities with far greater efficiency. These observations only serve to underline another advantage of greater defence industrial cooperation, which is that greater mutualisation at temporal distance from the frontline may eventually enable greater functional mutualisation.

A final point relates to the complexity of uncovering those circumstances in which mutualisation is possible and where autonomy can be traded for efficiency without creating new entrapment and abandonment concerns. This complexity perhaps best explains why the most advanced forms of military capability mutualisation tend to come 'bottom-up' as proposals from the military and specialist officials. Politicians may understand the logic of mutualisation for efficiency and the general nature of the risks involved, but few have the time or the technical understanding to determine how to trade-off mutualisation and risk. The theoretical approach here thus suggests

that the most successful division of labour in driving forward mutualisation will come from politicians pushing the strategic case for such cooperation and military decision-makers suggesting the practical ways that this can be done within limits prescribed by politicians. Here, however, there may not always be an alignment of interests, as mutualisation for efficiency may not be in the narrow interests of all elements of the military and civil service.

### *Scope for further research*

This thesis represents a ‘first cut’ attempt at defining and theorising capability mutualisation. As such, it raises the possibility of further research on similar empirical cases, other ways of testing the theory and other avenues of investigation concerning mutual dependence and military capability more broadly. These will be considered below:

#### i. Other cases of capability mutualisation

As the theoretical tools of analysis have now been established, it would be relatively straightforward to consider other cases of capability mutualisation, which would provide a further assessment of the plausibility and utility of the theory. As discussed in the introduction and methodology chapters, there are other contemporaneous European defence cooperation initiatives with elements of capability mutualisation, for example, the NORDEFCO cooperation between Scandinavian states, and the Visegrad group of Central and Eastern European states, and cooperation between a group of European states that operate the F16 fighter jet (NATO, 2012). And, as discussed, there are multinational groupings such as the extant initiatives under NATO auspices, including multinational fleets of multinational AWACS aircraft and C17 transport aircraft.

#### ii. Comparison with different systemic circumstances

It might also be fruitful to consider ways in which, and the extent to which, military capability mutualisation might occur in similar or quite different structural-relational configurations from that considered in this thesis. The methodological approach

undertaken in this thesis is a systemic one, i.e., that similar structural-relational configurations will result in similar behaviour and outcomes across a set of states with different internal attributes. There may, however, be other empirical opportunities to test the claims offered by this thesis, particularly that the durability of an alliance helps to explain the occurrence of mutualisation at temporal distance from the frontline. There are, for example, non-European but US-aligned states such as Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Japan; there may be some cooperative initiatives between those states that could be considered against the theoretical approach developed here. There is also increasingly developed defence cooperation between Russia and China, which could provide for analysis of behaviour in a non-US aligned relationship (Schwartz, 2018; Meick, 2017). Such research could also consider the extent to which frontline and functional mutualisation might be possible for these states, or whether other structural-relational configurations work against such cooperation.

### iii. Other forms of mutual dependence

Mutualisation of military capability as defined by this thesis is only one aspect of mutual dependence. Though this thesis has not considered the viability of whole capability specialisation underpinned by formal arrangements the theory does not rule this out. There is also the area of mutualisation of entire fields of defence industry, which missile cooperation hints at, and which already exists to a high degree in parts of the European defence aerospace sector. As Pannier has noted in her study of Franco-British defence cooperation, there is a strong degree of what she calls 'symmetrism' evident in all the cooperative arrangements considered above (Pannier, 2016: 85-96). While it has been assumed in this thesis that such symmetry is largely axiomatic to the cooperation of self-interested units in the form of 'win-win' arrangements, the means by which the symmetry of the relationship can be traded-off in both functional and temporal aspects of capability mutualisation is particularly interesting. For example, this thesis has considered mutualisation in the form of specialisation *within* capabilities. But in one case, mutual dependence has been pushed beyond the boundaries of a discrete capability. In the specialisation of support to different ship types in BENESAM naval cooperation mutualisation is balanced across two capabilities, MCM vessels and frigates. While both ships are

within the maritime domain, they provide separate capabilities. Thus, though these capabilities are mutualised in that they are not fully autonomous, there is an asymmetric dependence within each arrangement, i.e., Belgium depends on the Netherlands for support to its frigates, the Netherlands supports its own frigates. But the symmetry in terms of mutual dependence is restored by it being mirrored by Dutch dependence on Belgium for MCM support.

This raises the following question: Are there any limits on how far mutual dependence might be linked *across* rather than *within* capabilities? An initial answer is perhaps provided by the logic of behaviour in the asymmetric alliance configuration. As argued in the preceding case studies, the primary strategic end of subordinate states is the mitigation of entrapment by the dominant state. As a result, subordinate states tend to prefer forces with a breadth of military capabilities in order to maximise potential for contribution and influence. Thus, total specialisation of capabilities, which would result in completely foregoing a particular capability is unattractive, not only for reasons of entrapment and abandonment risks, but also for reasons of policy flexibility. The Dutch-Belgian arrangement helps preserve national capability while ensuring that mutual dependence holds more broadly than within a single capability. It is theoretically plausible, however, that if two or more states were faced with the impossibility of maintaining a capability in this way, they might opt for mutual dependence across two separate capabilities. Such an arrangement would still be subject to all the structural-relational constraints and possibilities described in the foregoing thesis, but it might be plausible, particularly at temporal remove from the frontline. So, for example, it might be theoretically plausible that State A could forego its surface-fleet ship building industry and specialise in submarine construction, and State B do the opposite.

#### iv. As a theoretical framework for historical analysis

Finally, the theoretical approach developed in this thesis also provides a framework for the in-depth consideration of capability mutualisation initiatives as historical case studies in themselves. As set out in the methodology chapter above, theory as envisaged by this thesis can provide either a general framework for explaining phenomena, or it can be used as a framework to provide the systemic causal



aspects of an historical narrative against which unit level factors such as domestic industrial policies, elements of culture, bureaucratic, party political and personality may be considered for a more historical, holistic narrative account.

## **ANNEX**

### **Example Questions for Semi-Structured Interview**

#### *Context for cooperation*

Broadly speaking, what are the primary drivers of Netherlands - German/Belgian cooperation?

To what extent are the cooperative initiatives between the Netherlands and Germany/Belgium driven by economic/budgetary constraints?

To what extent do contemporary cooperative initiatives draw on past cooperation?

How have the particular cooperation initiatives been chosen by the Netherlands and Belgium/Germany is this an ad hoc/bottom-up approach or is it more strategic?

Where do Dutch-Belgian and Dutch-German interests converge and diverge and how does this affect the depth of cooperation?

Does the Netherlands have a different conception of the use of force than its cooperation partners – how might this affect the form of particular cooperative initiatives?

#### *Sovereignty/autonomy*

How do you decide where to draw 'red lines' for the autonomy of military capability, i.e., what is an acceptable diminution of autonomy and what not?

How does the risk of abandonment or entrapment by a partner influence decisions over cooperation, i.e. interdependence may lead to a lack of flexibility over deployments?

Do certain forms of capability lend themselves to deeper cooperation, e.g. there is a strong degree of interdependence in the maritime domain BENESAM, could this be (or is it already) also the case for frontline Army units?

How does symmetry/asymmetry of partnership affect cooperation, i.e. Germany is a much larger state than Belgium?

How important is it for the success of cooperation initiatives that partners have a similar strategic culture? What elements are most important (e.g. willingness to use force/similar interests or Europeanist/Atlanticist outlook)?

How important is having similar equipment to contemporary defence cooperation between the Netherlands and Germany/Belgium?

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Number	Date	Location	Function	Direct
				Involvement
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2	January 20 15	London	UK official	Yes
3	April 2015	London	Former UK officer	Yes
4	January 2015	London	UK PM Political Adviser	Yes
5	March 2015	London	UK official	Yes
6	April 2015	London	Industry	Yes
7	April 2015	London	Industry	Yes
8	June 2016	Brussels	NATO official	No
9	June 2016	Brussels	French official	Yes
10	September 2015	London	French official	No
11	June 2015	London	French official	No
12	September 2015	London	Former UK Political Adviser	No
13	June 2014	London	Former UK official	No
14	June 2016	Brussels	Belgian official	No
15	June 2014	Brussels	Belgian officer	Yes
16	June 2014	Brussels	Belgian officer	Yes
17	June 2016	Brussels	Belgian officer	Yes
18	June 2014	Brussels	Belgian officer	Yes
19	June 2014	The Hague	Dutch officer	Yes
20	June 2014	The Hague	Dutch official	Yes
21	June 2014	The Hague	Dutch official	No
22	September 2016	Telephone	Former Dutch officer	No
23	June 2016	The Hague	Dutch official	Yes
24	June 2016	The Hague	Dutch official	Yes

25	June 2014	Zeebrugge	Belgian officer	Yes
26	October 2013	Berlin	German officer	Yes
27	October 2013	Berlin	German analyst	No
28	May 2015	London	German analyst	No
29	June 2015	Berlin	German officer	Yes
30	June 2014	Brussels	EU official	No

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